

MedChi

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TO: The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass, Chair
Members, House Health and Government Operations Committee
The Honorable Sheree Sample-Hughes

FROM: J. Steven Wise
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Richard A. Tabuteau

DATE: February 20, 2019

RE: **SUPPORT** – House Bill 570 – *Behavioral Health Programs – Medical Directors – Telehealth*

The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), the largest physician organization in Maryland, **supports** House Bill 570.

House Bill 570 permits a licensed behavioral health program's medical director to provide services through telehealth and prohibits any requirement that the medical director be onsite in areas designated as health professional shortage areas. This legislation comes in response to the shortage of psychiatrists in Maryland and throughout the country, particularly in rural areas.

Currently, a behavioral health program's medical director must be on site for at least 20 hours per week. Given the shortage of psychiatrists, this greatly limits the availability and geographic reach of a psychiatrist. Removing that requirement and enabling the use of telehealth is a reasonable solution to this shortage.

For these reasons, MedChi urges your support of House Bill 570.

For more information call:

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