

# MedChi

*The Maryland State Medical Society*

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TO: The Honorable Delores G. Kelley, Chair  
Members, Senate Finance Committee  
The Honorable Adelaide C. Eckardt

FROM: J. Steven Wise  
Pamela Metz Kasemeyer  
Danna L. Kauffman  
Richard A. Tabuteau

DATE: February 6, 2019

RE: **SUPPORT** – Senate Bill 178 – *Behavioral Health Programs – Medical Directors – Telehealth*

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The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), the largest physician organization in Maryland, **supports** Senate Bill 178.

Senate Bill 178 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 Senate Bill 178.

**For more information call:**

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