

MedChi

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TO: The Honorable Delores G. Kelley, Chair
Members, Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable Malcolm Augustine

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

DATE: February 20, 2019

RE: **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT** – Senate Bill 403 – *Behavioral Health Administration – Outpatient Civil Commitment – Statewide Expansion*

The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), the largest physician organization in Maryland, **supports with amendment** Senate Bill 403.

Senate Bill 403 expands statewide the pilot program for outpatient civil commitment that was enacted through legislation in 2017. Baltimore City has conducted the pilot and the individuals served by the pilot program are being effectively engaged, have experienced positive results, and have continued to participate in services. Because the outcomes and response to the program have been very positive, an expansion of the program statewide should be pursued. The bill does not require, but rather authorizes a local authority to establish a program, thus leaving the discretion of establishing a program to the local authority which MedChi believes is appropriate at this time.

Senate Bill 403 establishes an Outpatient Civil Commitment Advisory Committee. The Administration is charged with developing regulations to implement the program in consultation with the Advisory Committee. To that end, MedChi is concerned that the composition of the Advisory Committee does not include anyone with clinical expertise, which is essential to ensuring the program includes the appropriate clinical framework, criteria, and patients' rights and protections. MedChi requests the bill be amended to add a psychiatrist with relevant expertise to the membership of the Advisory Committee. With its amendment noted, MedChi urges a favorable report.

For more information call:

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