



American Academy of Pediatrics  
DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™  
Maryland Chapter



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TO: The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky, Chair  
Members, Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee  
The Honorable Obie Patterson  
The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky

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

DATE: February 26, 2019

RE: **SUPPORT WITH SPONSOR AMENDMENT** – Senate Bill 565 – *Health Occupations – Practice of Optometry – Therapeutically Certified Optometrists*

**OPPOSE** – Senate Bill 447 – *Health Occupations – Requirements for the Practice of Optometry – Miscellaneous Revisions*

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On behalf of the Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), and the Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (MDAAP), we **support with sponsor amendments** Senate Bill 565, which expands the optometric scope of practice by providing optometrists with greater prescribing authority and authorizing optometrists to independently treat primary open-angle glaucoma, following adoption of a treatment plan. MedChi and MDAAP believe Senate Bill 565 is a fair compromise that provides optometrists with additional authority to care for patients while protecting patients against the possibility of more invasive procedures.

In supporting Senate Bill 565, MedChi & MDAAP **oppose** Senate Bill 447, which we believe inappropriately expands the optometric scope of practice and risks patient safety. Senate Bill 447 grants broad authority to optometrists to prescribe ALL topical and oral medications, devices and treatments without appropriate safeguards, such as a prohibition on medications that must be injected or administered intravenously. The above-named organizations also strongly oppose the absence of a physician in diagnosing and determining the appropriate treatment for a patient presenting with possible glaucoma. On a related note, MedChi & MDAAP also oppose the provision to allow an optometrist to treat all classes of glaucoma, even childhood glaucoma. In addition, these organizations oppose the language that would allow optometrists to administer or prescribe any treatment for the management of an ocular disease. This broad language could easily allow scalpel or laser surgery, which we strongly oppose.

For these and other reasons, we request a favorable vote on Senate Bill 565 with the amendments offered by the sponsor.

**For more information call:**

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