

# MedChi

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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: March 19, 2019

RE: **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT** – Senate Bill 944 – *Behavioral Health Programs – Medical Directors – Psychiatric Nurse Practitioners*

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The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), the largest physician organization in Maryland, **supports with amendment** Senate Bill 944.

This legislation seeks to help remedy the shortage of psychiatrists available in certain areas of the State to serve as medical directors in behavioral health programs, a problem which MedChi recognizes. To that end, MedChi has supported other legislation pending this Session that would allow psychiatrists to utilize telehealth as a means of addressing this shortage (see Senate Bill 178 (Eckardt) & House Bill 570 (Sample-Hughes)). This legislation takes a different approach by allowing a psychiatric nurse practitioner to serve in the position of medical director. However, a "medical director", in the eyes of patients and their families, has always referred to a physician, and retaining that title when a nurse practitioner fills the role of "medical director", as this bill permits, may lead to confusion.

For this reason, MedChi suggests an amendment that would change the title to "Clinical Director", so as to reflect the fact that a nurse practitioner may fill the role. With this change, MedChi supports Senate Bill 944.

**For more information call:**

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