

## 2007 Legislative Agenda\*

**BOARD OF PHYSICIAN SUNSET REVIEW:** MedChi will work to assure that the comprehensive reauthorization legislation dealing with the Board of Physicians will result in increased efficiency and cost effectiveness with the proper protection of physician rights.

**MEDICAID AND THE UNINSURED:** MedChi will continue to protect the integrity of the Medicaid program with respect to eligibility and benefits and will continue to advocate for increased access to appropriate care for all Maryland citizens regardless of coverage or ability to pay. We consider an increase in the tobacco tax the best manner to financially support this goal.

**MEDICAL LIABILITY REFORM:** MedChi will continue to work for further liability reform with a multi-pronged approach:

- Continuation of the present state financial subsidy for malpractice premiums;
- Short-term, common-sense reforms focusing on a strengthened certificate of merit requirement, California like caps on attorney contingency fees and a more effective apology law;
- Long-term focus on a redesign of the liability system in Maryland.

**PHYSICIAN PAYMENT REFORM:** Maryland physician reimbursements fall below the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile nationally, according to the Maryland Health Care Commission. MedChi will work to improve the reimbursement climate for Maryland physicians with multiple initiatives including:

- Legislative and regulatory action to create adequate physician reimbursement;
- A legislative correction of the current “cramdown law” which, MedChi believes, allows a physician to participate in a particular insurance product without being required to take “all products” offered by a carrier;
- Change current law to improve the monetary benchmark for an HMO’s calculation of its required payment to a non-participating physician;
- Legislation to require insurance carriers to recognize patient assignment of benefits to out-of-network providers.

**PUBLIC HEALTH:** MedChi will advocate for continued improvements in Maryland’s public health agenda.

- Proposals to discourage tobacco use and funding for access for the growing number of uninsured. MedChi believes that two critical issues are the passage of (1) an increase of \$1.00 per-pack in the cigarette tax to fund expanded health care programs and (2) the Clean Indoor Air Act to prohibit smoking in all places of public accommodation;
- A change in Maryland’s HIV laws to comply with Centers For Disease Control recommendations so as to provide for routine testing (subject to a person’s consent) and name identification of HIV positive individuals to public health authorities.

**SCOPE OF MEDICAL PRACTICE:** MedChi will fight to assure that only physicians practice medicine and that non-physician practice is consistent with appropriate training and physician oversight.

### **UNITED ACTION WITH ALLIED AND SPECIALTY GROUPS:**

- Support of efforts to assure that primary care doctors giving routine vaccines are reimbursed for vaccine costs;
- Support the efforts of the medical community to correct insurance abuses that penalize physicians for practicing in multiple settings and serving diverse populations.

\*MedChi’s Agenda is listed alphabetically; each item is equally important and will receive priority attention.