TO: The Honorable Joan Carter Conway, Chair
   Members, Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
   The Honorable Ariana B. Kelly

FROM: Joseph A. Schwartz, III
       Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
       J. Steven Wise
       Danna L. Kauffman

DATE: March 27, 2014

RE: SUPPORT – House Bill 959 – State Board of Physicians – Qualifications for Licensure and Definitions

The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), which represents more than 8,000 Maryland physicians and their patients, supports House Bill 959.

House Bill 959 alters the definition of “board certified” to include a certifying board that is a member of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada or the College of Family Physicians of Canada. This language is already contained in Board regulations but was not included when legislation was passed in 2012 relating to board certification.

Second, the bill clarifies an ambiguity that was identified by the Office of the Attorney General (AG) in 2013 as to the ability of a person who fails a step or level of the medical exam 3 or more times to still become licensed. The language used in House Bill 1313/2013 appears to imply that such a person could become licensed without ultimately passing the exam. As the AG noted in reviewing that bill, “The Board has historically interpreted [the statute] to impose special requirements on an applicant who failed the licensure examination three times but who ultimately passed the examination, not to establish a special means for obtaining a license without passing the exam.” In short, this legislation makes clear that a person must pass the examination in all circumstances in order to become licensed.

MedChi believes this legislation provides proper clarification on these two issues, and therefore is in support of House Bill 959.

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