TO: The Honorable Peter A. Hammen, Chair  
Members, House Health and Government Operations Committee  
The Honorable Ariana Kelly

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

DATE: March 12, 2015

RE: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT – House Bill 949 – Task Force to Study the  
Provision of Health Care Coverage to Uninsured Marylanders

The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), which represents more than 8,000  
Maryland physicians and their patients, supports House Bill 949 with an amendment.

House Bill 949 organizes a Task Force for the purpose of studying the remaining pool of  
uninsured Marylanders who are not covered by health insurance despite the passage of the  
Federal Affordable Care Act. Unfortunately the Task Force does not appoint a single doctor  
to its membership and MedChi believes that that oversight should be cured by an appropriate  
amendment.

Indeed, many years before the Affordable Care Act, doctors in Maryland were creating  
health coverage for uninsured citizens. House Bill 949 references the Montgomery Cares  
Program (page 3, line 32) which is a creation of the Primary Care Coalition which was first  
created by two Montgomery County doctors in 1993 (Carroll Garvey, M.D. and Horace  
Bernton, M.D.) www.primarycarecoalition.org. Similar efforts occurred in other counties as  
well. Anne Arundel doctors created a program called “REACH” in cooperation with the  
County Health Department starting in 1999. Some 700 physicians, providers, nurse  
practitioners, physical therapists and other health care professionals treated age 19-65 year  
old patients without insurance at a reduced rate based upon their income (about $30 per  
visit). At one time, approximately 2,000 patients were involved in the REACH program but  
that has now been reduced to a few hundred because of the effect of the Federal Affordable  
Care Act.
As House Bill 949 correctly realizes that there is a residual pool of patients who will not have health insurance despite the Affordable Care Act. In many cases these will be undocumented individuals. However, MedChi believes the entire system benefits when all citizens have regular access to health care and particularly to primary care doctors so as to avoid health problems which fester and end up in emergency rooms.

With the proposed addition of a doctor to the Task Force, MedChi supports House Bill 949.

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