TO: The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass, Chair
   Members, House Health and Government Operations Committee
   The Honorable Kirill Reznik

FROM: Pamela M. Kasemeyer
       J. Steven Wise
       Danna L. Kauffman

DATE: February 8, 2017

RE: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT – House Bill 352 – Health Care Practitioners –
   Use of Teletherapy

The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), which represents more than 7,600
Maryland physicians and their patients, supports House Bill 352, with amendment.

House Bill 352 creates a framework for the delivery of teletherapy services in the State.
The mode of delivery of behavioral health services anticipated in this legislation expands upon
the framework provided in Maryland’s telemedicine law. MedChi has been a strong proponent
of appropriately structured telemedicine programs. These programs have the potential to greatly
expand access to medically necessary services. Similarly, House Bill 352 would provide a
framework for the provision of behavioral health services through teletherapy to address those
circumstances when individuals are unable to access care in the presence of a health care
practitioner. MedChi applauds the sponsor for his recognition of a component of telemedicine
that has not yet been addressed.

While MedChi supports the sponsor’s objectives, it does not support the implementation
of the program through the regulatory action by the licensing boards. Behavioral health is often
provided through multi-disciplinary practice and the potential for conflicting regulatory
requirements by the various licensing Boards could undermine the implementation and
jeopardize the provision of the anticipated services. MedChi is also concerned that the
legislation may not be appropriately aligned with the telemedicine statute which could also
create conflicts in implementing an effective teletherapy program. For these reasons, MedChi
requests that the Committee consider these concerns and amend the bill accordingly before
passage.

For more information call:
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