

MedChi

The Maryland State Medical Society

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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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