



The Maryland State Medical Society

News: For Immediate Release

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MEDCHI HIGHLIGHTS NEW HEALTH LAWS THAT WILL BEGIN OCTOBER 1

BALTIMORE, September 29, 2021 — MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society, is giving an overview of health laws, that were of interest to MedChi during the 2021 Legislative Session, which will take effect on October 1, 2021. MedChi's mission is to serve as Maryland's foremost advocate and resource for physicians, their patients, and the public health.

The following behavioral health law has taken effect:

- House Bill 108/Senate Bill 286 alters the requirements for grant proposals and for awarding grants under the Behavioral Health Crisis Response Grant Program.
- House Bill 605/Senate Bill 164 requires Maryland Department of Health to include mental health first aid among the behavioral health services for which they provide service coordination for eligible veterans.

The following health care facility laws have taken effect:

- House Bill 289/Senate Bill 105 authorizes an employer to file a petition for a peace order on behalf of an employee who alleges the commission of violence against the employee at the employee's workplace.
- House Bill 1153 removes MedChi and the Board of Physicians from the role of approving applications for the names of physician professional corporations.

The following public health and environmental laws have taken effect:

- House Bill 849 changes the current law governing fees that may be charged to patients or their representatives seeking copies of medical records and prohibits a fee being charged if the record will be used for the purpose of filing a claim or appeal regarding denial of social security disability income or social security benefits under the Social Security Act.
- House Bill 28/Senate Bill 5 requires all licensed and certified health care professionals to complete an implicit bias training course approved by the Cultural and Linguistic Health Care Professional Competency Program, in conjunction with the Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities, that is recognized by a health occupations board or accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education.
- House Bill 78/Senate Bill 52 creates a Maryland Commission on Health Equity that is charged with developing a "health equity framework" to examine ways for state and local government agencies to collaborate and implement policies that will positively impact the health of residents of the state.
- House Bill 309/Senate Bill 565 requires the Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities to collaborate with MHCC and professional licensing boards to publish the annual "Health Care Disparities Policy Report Card", which is to include data on the ethnic and racial composition of the health care provider community.
- House Bill 372/Senate Bill 420 decriminalizes possession of items that can be used to inject, ingest, inhale, or otherwise consume a controlled dangerous substance.

- House Bill 1349/Senate Bill 777 expands the current Prenatal and Infant Care grant program to include grant funding for the provision of prenatal care services to low-income residents who do not otherwise have access to Medicaid or other health care services.

Lastly, here are the prescription drug laws that have taken effect:

- House Bill 429/Senate Bill 537 allows a therapeutically equivalent brand-named drug to be substituted for a generic drug by a pharmacist in the rare circumstance where the brand-named drug is less expensive to the consumer.
- House Bill 107/Senate Bill 499 allows over-the-counter medications to be sold through a vending machine.

Gene Ransom, MedChi CEO, states “during the ongoing pandemic, the Maryland General Assembly remains very active in health care legislation, passing numerous emergency bills as well as these that will take effect October 1, 2021. MedChi continues to monitor and advocate on measures like these as an advocate for physicians, patients, and the public health.” To review any bill in its entirety, please go to www.mgaleg.maryland.gov.

About MedChi

MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society, is a non-profit membership association of Maryland physicians. It is the largest physician organization in Maryland. The mission of MedChi is to serve as Maryland's foremost advocate and resource for physicians, their patients, and the public health of Maryland. For more information, please visit www.medchi.org.