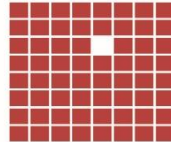




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**TO:** The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass, Chair  
Members, House Health and Government Operations Committee  
The Honorable Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk

**FROM:** Danna L. Kauffman  
Pamela Metz Kasemeyer  
J. Steven Wise  
Richard A. Tabuteau  
410-244-7000

**DATE:** February 26, 2020

**RE:** **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT** – House Bill 1121 – *Maryland Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Registry and Referral System*

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On behalf of the Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), and the Maryland Chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians (MDACEP), we submit this letter of **support** for House Bill 1121. House Bill 1121 establishes the Maryland Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Registry and Referral System (System) in the Maryland Department of Health. The purpose of this Registry is to provide a Statewide system through which health care providers can identify and access available inpatient and outpatient mental health and substance use services for patients in a seamless manner. House Bill 1121 also creates an Advisory Committee to advise the Department on the development and implementation of the System.

MedChi and MDACEP support the establishment of this System. Patient “boarding” is a significant problem in emergency medicine. Maryland performs far worse compared to national standards in the time it takes for a patient to be discharged from an emergency department (ED) to another care setting or to be admitted to inpatient status. For psychiatric patients, the problem is significantly worse, with psychiatric patients remaining in the ED far longer than medical patients. While access to care and the need for services remains paramount, House Bill 1121 will assist physicians, emergency personnel and other health care providers in locating available care options. We would request that an emergency physician be added to the Advisory Committee to be designated by MDACEP. With this amendment, we request a favorable vote.