

# 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 Benjamin F. Kramer

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

DATE: April 1, 2021

RE: **SUPPORT** – Senate Bill 837 – *Health – Advance Care Planning and Advance Directives*

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The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), the largest physician organization in Maryland, **supports** Senate Bill 837.

Senate Bill 837 requires the adoption of a number of measures designed to increase public awareness of the importance of advance care planning and facilitate access to advance care planning documents, such as advanced directives. The legislation charges the Health Care Commission with coordinating the implementation of advance care planning programs. The Commission can specify actions to be taken by health care systems and health care providers to encourage individuals to execute advance directives, including through an electronic service recognized by the Commission. Senate Bill 837, also, requires carriers to make electronic advance directives available to enrollees during open enrollment and to periodically inquire whether enrollees have executed or updated their advance directive.

MedChi strongly supports efforts to advance the public's appreciation of the importance of advance care planning and, specifically, the execution of an advanced directive. Individuals and their families too often find themselves in unexpected circumstances where they wish they had considered health care decision-making preferences and responsibilities when the decisions are required and the appropriate legal framework to enable health care providers to honor the desire of the individual has not been put in place. Passage of Senate Bill 837 will enhance the likelihood that individuals will execute the legal decision-making frameworks required by health care providers and health care systems prior to a need for their use. A favorable report is requested.

**For more information call:**

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