

# MedChi

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TO: The Honorable Vanessa E. Atterbeary, Chair  
Members, House Ways and Means Committee

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DATE: February 1, 2023

RE: **SUPPORT** – House Bill 119 – *Primary and Secondary Education – Comprehensive Health Education Framework – Establishment*

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The Maryland State Medical Society, the largest physician organization in Maryland, **supports** House Bill 119.

House Bill 119 requires the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), in consultation with the Maryland Department of Health, to develop a comprehensive health education framework that shall at a minimum include the topics: health promotion, mental and emotional health, substance abuse prevention, family life and human sexuality, gender identity and sexual orientation, safety and violence prevention, healthy eating, and disease prevention and control. Each County Board is required to create an age-appropriate curriculum that is consistent with the comprehensive health education framework developed by MSDE. Further, the bill requires each County Board to establish a committee composed of educators, health experts, and members of the local community to review and comment on whether the curriculum materials are consistent with the comprehensive health education framework.

Providing comprehensive and age appropriate health education is critical to enhancing the health and well-being of children and adolescents. Many of the subject areas identified in the legislation reflect issues that all youth should be informed about and should have an opportunity to engage in better understanding their implications. Without comprehensive education programs in the schools, many students will not have an avenue to gain the education and insight that would be provided through the required curriculum. Finally, the bill requires input from educators and health experts as well as the local community, thereby ensuring that the curriculum adopted reflects the collective expertise and recommendations of professionals which will enhance the effectiveness of the program. A favorable report is requested.