

MedChi

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TO: The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky, Chair
Members, Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
The Honorable Ronald N. Young

FROM: J. Steven Wise
Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
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Richard A. Tabuteau

DATE: March 10, 2020

RE: **OPPOSE** – Senate Bill 416 – *Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Interstate Compact*

The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), the largest physician organization in Maryland, **opposes** Senate Bill 416.

Senate Bill 416 enters Maryland into the Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Interstate Compact. Like other Compacts, this would allow audiologists and speech-language pathologists to become licensed in a “home state” that is a member of the Compact, but to also practice in other “member states”. As was done with the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact, there are issues that need to be examined closely to ensure that Maryland is not permitting members of these health professions to enter practice in Maryland without adequate safeguards and protections for patients. The State should be certain that the Compact Commission cannot alter the scope of practice as it stands in Maryland, which would in effect cede the State’s control over scope of practice to an out of state entity.

Similarly, the General Assembly appears poised to adopt telehealth legislation that allows asynchronous communication between providers and patients. While that legislation makes clear that the provider is subject to the “appropriate standard of care” as determined by the governing board in this State, the Compact, on the other hand, mandates that a Compact provider may “practice audiology or speech-language pathology in any member state via telehealth under a privilege to practice as provided in the Compact and rules promulgated by the Commission.” These apparent conflicts need to be considered thoroughly before the Compact is adopted.

Finally, MedChi believes that the Commission should have a physician presence under Section 8.B(2) of the Compact.

For these reasons, MedChi opposes Senate Bill 416.

For more information call:

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