

MedChi

The Maryland State Medical Society

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TO: The Honorable Delores G. Kelley, Chair
Members, Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable Cory V. McCray

FROM: J. Steven Wise
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Richard A. Tabuteau

DATE: February 18, 2020

RE: **OPPOSE** – Senate Bill 521 – *Behavioral Health – Opioid Treatment Services Programs – Medical Director*

The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), the largest physician organization in Maryland, **opposes** Senate Bill 521.

Senate Bill 521 requires that each opioid treatment services program (OTP) be under the direction of at least one on-site medical director, and that the medical director be on-site at least 20 hours each week. Furthermore, it prohibits the use of telehealth to satisfy any of those hours.

MedChi shares the concerns that the MD-DC Society of Addiction Medicine raises in its letter. Medical Directors of OTPs must be physicians. There is already a shortage of physicians who meet the qualifications to serve in that capacity. Indeed, these Medical Directors typically divide their time across several OTPs, so meeting the 20-hour requirements set out in Senate Bill 521 would only exacerbate this problem by requiring that more hours be spent in one place.

MedChi understands that some OTPs may not be meeting the operational standards that are expected of them, and that those OTPs need to do a better job in managing their facilities. While the goal of Senate Bill 521 may be to achieve better compliance in this regard, we are concerned that other unintended consequences will result with adverse consequences to patients.

For these reasons, MedChi opposes Senate Bill 521.

For more information call:

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