

# MedChi

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TO: The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass, Chair  
Members, House Health and Government Operations Committee  
The Honorable Terri L. Hill

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

DATE: March 11, 2020

RE: **SUPPORT** – House Bill 1461 – *Behavioral Health Programs – Outpatient Mental Health Centers – Medical and Clinical Directors*

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The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), the largest physician organization in Maryland, **supports** House Bill 1461.

House Bill 1461 establishes the roles of Medical Directors and Clinical Directors in outpatient mental health centers and requires that the medical director of an outpatient mental health center be a licensed and appropriately trained physician.

Defining these roles in the manner set out by House Bill 1461 has already been done in other contexts under Maryland law. For example, the regulations governing drug and alcohol treatment programs distinguish between a medical director and clinical director and define a medical director as “a physician who oversees the medical practice of a [drug or alcohol abuse] program.” COMAR 10.47.01.02(B)(39). Those regulations also set forth definitions of clinical director and clinical supervisor, who provide direction of the program and supervise staff. Both roles are essential to the care of patients, but the medical director is ultimately responsible for clinical decision-making.

MedChi believes that distinguishing these roles is important in outpatient mental health centers for the same reasons. A licensed physician should be the person overseeing the medical practice, but also working in tandem with the clinical director. These centers serve a very vulnerable population of patients and it takes a team to obtain results. But because the population served is so vulnerable, MedChi believes that a medical director should be a physician and one who is board certified in psychiatry, as the bill requires.

For these reasons, MedChi supports House Bill 1461.

**For more information call:**

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