

MedChi

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TO: The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky, Chair
Members, Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
The Honorable Adelaide C. Eckardt

FROM: J. Steven Wise
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Danna L. Kauffman
Christine K. Krone

DATE: February 10, 2022

RE: **OPPOSE** – Senate Bill 513 – *Health Occupations – Clinical Nurse Specialists – Prescribing Authority*

The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), the largest physician organization in Maryland, **opposes** Senate Bill 513.

Senate Bill 513 defines the term “clinical nurse specialist” (CNS) and sets forth the scope of practice for a CNS. MedChi has significant questions about the role of the CNS as currently defined versus what their role would become if Senate Bill 513 were to pass, as set out below.

The term CNS is included in the statutory definition of “Advanced Practice Nurse” (HO §8-101) and requires that a CNS be licensed as a registered nurse and “certified to practice as a CNS”. Beyond that, the statute provides no definition on the role of a CNS or their scope of practice. However, existing regulations of the Board of Nursing provide that a CNS’ scope includes: 1) “continuous improvement of patient outcomes and nursing care”, 2) acting “in accordance with the core competencies of the National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists...”, 3) “creating therapeutic environments through mentoring and system changes”, and 4) “practicing with individual clients, families, groups and populations of clients.” These regulations provide very little guidance in terms of what tasks and duties a CNS may undertake.

Senate Bill 513 would expand the scope of a CNS beyond that of even a Nurse Practitioner (NP), another type of Advanced Practice Nurse (scope found at HO §8-101(m)), by allowing the CNS to “order, perform, and interpret...diagnostic tests”. While *laboratory* tests are included in the statute outlining the scope of practice for an NP, *diagnostic* tests are not. MedChi does not believe that the scope of a CNS should be broadened beyond even that of a NP.

In addition, Senate Bill 513 would allow a CNS to “prescribe drugs and durable medical equipment...” While NPs are permitted to prescribe, MedChi is not certain that the CNS receives the same training, experience, and mentorship in prescribing medications that an NP does, so as to warrant this authority. We have been in communication with representatives of the CNSs in this regard and are reviewing information they have provided.

For now, MedChi has too many unanswered questions about the role of the CNS and the changes proposed in the legislation. Accordingly, MedChi would ask the Committee to oppose Senate Bill 513.

For more information call:

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