

MedChi

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TO: The Honorable Melony Griffith, Chair
Members, Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable Jill P. Carter

FROM: Danna L. Kauffman
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DATE: March 15, 2023

RE: **SUPPORT** – Senate Bill 75 – *Insurance and Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Treatment of Alopecia Areata – Coverage Requirements*

The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), the largest physician organization in Maryland, **supports** *Senate Bill 75: Insurance and Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Treatment of Alopecia Areata – Coverage Requirements*. This bill requires Medicaid to cover one hair prosthesis for a recipient whose hair loss results from alopecia areata and to cover prescription drugs and medical devices approved by the federal Food and Drug Administration for its treatment. For commercial carriers (which are already required to cover a hair prosthesis as a result of chemo or radiation), this bill adds covering a hair prosthesis resulting from alopecia areata.

Alopecia areata is a chronic disease that occurs when the immune system attacks hair follicles. Alopecia areata causes hair loss, typically on the head and face. Alopecia areata varies from person to person. Those inflicted by the disease are often healthy with no other symptoms. Recovery is unpredictable, with hair regrowing fully in some people but not others. There is no cure, but treatments can help hair grow back.

The General Assembly has recognized the benefit of mandating coverage of a hair prosthesis when hair loss is the result of chemotherapy or radiation resulting from cancer. The emotional toll occurring not only as a result of the cancer but because of the effects of the treatment often leads to depression, sadness, and anxiety in patients. According to the National Alopecia Areata Foundation, the same can be true for those suffering from alopecia areata. Therefore, MedChi believes that the benefits that the General Assembly has already established for coverage of hair prosthesis resulting from cancer treatments holds true for those with alopecia areata. We request a favorable report.