

# MedChi

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TO: The Honorable Pamela Beidle, Chair  
Members, Senate Finance Committee  
The Honorable Senate President Bill Ferguson (Administration)

FROM: J. Steven Wise  
Pamela Metz Kasemeyer  
Danna L. Kauffman  
Andrew G. Vetter  
Christine K. Krone

DATE: February 20, 2024

RE: **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT** – Senate Bill 453 – *Mental Health – Emergency Evaluation and Involuntary Admission Procedures and Assisted Outpatient Treatment Programs*

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The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), the largest physician organization in Maryland, **supports Senate Bill 453 with amendment.**

The purpose of the bill is to establish a better and more effective mental health system in Maryland, something that MedChi strongly supports. The principal issue raised with the bill during MedChi's discussions is that it would change the location to which a peace officer would take an emergency evaluatee for evaluation.

Under current law, the evaluatee is to be taken to the "nearest" emergency facility for an evaluation. However, the bill would alter this to require that the evaluatee be taken to "a nearby" emergency facility. There is concern that this proposed change would cluster emergency evaluatees at certain facilities rather than spreading them out among all emergency facilities and would exacerbate wait time problems at certain emergency facilities that received a disproportionate number of evaluatees. While well-intended, MedChi does not believe this change is needed and believes the current law should be left intact.

Thank you for your consideration of our position on this important bill.

**For more information call:**

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