

MedChi

The Maryland State Medical Society

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TO: The Honorable Joseline A. Pena Melnyk, Chair
Members, House Health and Government Operations Committee
The Honorable Speaker of the House Adrienne A. Jones (Administration)

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

DATE: February 14, 2024

RE: **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT** – House Bill 576 – *Mental Health – Emergency Evaluation and Involuntary Admission Procedures and Assisted Outpatient Treatment Programs*

The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), the largest physician organization in Maryland, **supports House Bill 576 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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