

MedChi

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TO: The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky, Chair
Members, Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
The Honorable Ronald N. Young

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

DATE: January 26, 2021

RE: **OPPOSE** – Senate Bill 183 – *Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Interstate Compact*

The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), the largest physician organization in Maryland, **opposes** Senate Bill 183.

Senate Bill 183 enters Maryland into the Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Interstate Compact. Like other Compacts, this would allow audiologists and speech-language pathologists to become licensed in a “home state” that is a member of the Compact, but to also practice in other “member states”. Physicians, namely otolaryngologists, work as a team with audiologists and are concerned about the impact this could have on the qualifications of audiologists and speech pathologists allowed to practice in the State. Unlike the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact, which provides an expedited process for a physician to become licensed in a State and subjects the physician to the scope of practice in each state, joining this Compact grants the privilege to practice in all states by being licensed in one state. The General Assembly should be certain that this significant difference in structure does not cede Maryland’s control over the scope of practice to the Compact Commission.

Similarly, the General Assembly last year adopted telehealth legislation. That legislation made clear that a provider is subject to the “appropriate standard of care” as determined by the governing board in this State. The proposed Compact, on the other hand, mandates that a provider may “practice audiology or speech-language pathology in any member state via telehealth under a privilege to practice as provided in the Compact and rules promulgated by the Commission.” See Section 5.A. This apparent conflict also needs to be considered thoroughly before the Compact is adopted.

Finally, MedChi believes that there should be a physician member of the Compact Commission under Section 8.B of the Compact.

For these reasons, MedChi opposes Senate Bill 183.

For more information call:

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