

MMPAC Survey 2013-14
(The Maryland State Medical Society's PAC)

1. Low reimbursement rates and administrative requirements of the health insurance carriers and HMOs in Maryland are having a damaging effect on medicine in the State. Low reimbursements make it difficult for the state to recruit new young physicians, as well as physicians who will answer emergency calls. Administrative requirements increase the cost of providing care and often create unreasonable barriers to accessing necessary care. According to the Maryland Health Care Commission, Maryland ranks in the bottom 25 percent of states regarding insurance reimbursement rates for physicians. Do you support legislation that would level the playing field, improve physician payments and lessen administrative burdens?

_____ Support

_____ Oppose

2. Insurers sometimes refuse to pay for or allow services properly ordered by physicians, and instead require another procedure or drug first. These policies, called "step therapy" or "fail first", delay necessary treatment and can harm patients. Would you support legislation to protect patients from insurers' "step therapy" policies?

_____ Support

_____ Oppose

3. In recent years, legislation has been introduced in the General Assembly with the intention of providing naturopaths a scope of practice that is nearly identical to that of the practice of medicine, despite naturopaths having training and experience substantially less than that of a physician. Do you support allowing naturopaths this scope of practice without comprehensive physician oversight?

_____ Support

_____ Oppose

4. Do you support increasing the tobacco tax in Maryland by \$1.00 to fund Medicaid expansion and other public health initiatives?

_____ Support

_____ Oppose

5. In July of 2013, the Maryland Court of Appeals upheld the standard of contributory negligence, which prohibits plaintiffs in medical malpractice and other negligence cases from recovering when they have contributed to their own injuries. This standard has helped hold down the costs of liability insurance in the State. If legislation were introduced to abandon contributory negligence and adopt the standard of comparative negligence, where fault is apportioned among defendants even if a plaintiff contributed to their own injuries, would you support or oppose that legislation?

_____ Support

_____ Oppose

6. In order to avert a medical malpractice insurance crisis in the 1980s, the General Assembly enacted tort reform. These legislative efforts worked well as the price of medical malpractice insurance stabilized and doctors were no longer forced out of the business because of malpractice premiums. In 2004-2005, the General Assembly worked to stabilize the medical malpractice market when premiums were again spinning out of control. One of the efforts was to lower the "cap" on non-economic damages (pain and suffering) in medical malpractice lawsuits. Even though the Maryland "cap" remains one of the highest in the United States, most experts believe that it is the primary reason that malpractice insurance rates have stabilized. Plaintiffs' lawyers have tried to alter or remove this "cap." What is your position on the present statutory cap on non-economic damages?

_____ Support

_____ Oppose

Please print name: _____

Signature: _____