Telemedicine Taskforce Update

The Maryland Health Quality and Cost Council’s Telemedicine Taskforce will make recommendations on developing an interoperable telemedicine system that will improve access to clinical care across the State of Maryland. The Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems (MIEMSS) and the Maryland Health Care Commission (MHCC) will co-chair a process, in consultation with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene that will broaden the work last year of the Stroke Telemedicine Taskforce that was spearheaded by the University of Maryland and Johns Hopkins University Schools of Medicine. MIEMSS is the state agency that coordinates emergency care in Maryland and the MHCC leads the state healthcare planning process and provides oversight for the State’s Health Information Technology initiative. The report of the Stroke Telemedicine Taskforce will be instrumental in identifying possible use cases (stroke, trauma, perinatal, ICU, and others) and in defining essential elements necessary for establishing a comprehensive telemedicine system in Maryland.

Taskforce approaches will incorporate issues identified in Senate Bill 406 (2011 Session), Task Force to Study the Use of Telemedicine in Medically Underserved Populations and Areas, and the taskforce will keep the Senate Finance and House Health and Government Operations Committees informed of progress. The Taskforce includes members with expertise in public health, clinical medicine, technology, finance, law, and healthcare regulation. The Taskforce will be divided into the following workgroups:

1) **Clinical Advisory Group**: to include clinicians, telemedicine providers and users, chief medical officers, MedChi, Maryland Hospital Association, Maryland Rural Health Association, and hospital and consumer representatives. Chair, Dr. Bob Bass.

2) **Technical Solutions and Standards Advisory Group**: to include hospital chief information officers, Maryland Department of Information Technology, CRISP, the Health Information Exchange and consumer representatives. Chair, Mr. David Sharp.

3) **Financial and Business Model Advisory Group**: Payers, telemedicine providers and hospital chief financial officers. Chair, Mr. Ben Steffen.

The Clinical and the Technology Solutions and Standards Advisory Groups will begin meeting in the next few weeks, with the Financial and Business Model Advisory Group beginning work shortly thereafter. The Clinical Advisory Group will make their recommendations prior to the bulk of the work by the other groups. Issues related to regulation, licensure, and credentialing will be addressed as a cross-cutting issue for each of the advisory groups. The Taskforce will provide quarterly updates to the Council and a Final Report will be submitted to the Governor by January of 2012.