

February 18, 2019

Maryland House of Delegates
Health & Government Operations Committee
House Office Building, Room 241
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: House Bill 512 (Drugs and Devices – Electronic Prescriptions – Controlled Dangerous)

Dear Chair Shane E. Pendergrass, Vice-Chair Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk, and Committee Members:

When it comes to the opioid crisis—the one thing we all agree is a state and national epidemic—we still prefer old fashioned pen and paper. But pen and paper make it too hard to stop this healthcare problem.

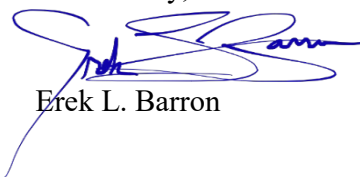
I know all of you are well-aware of the enormity of this crisis in Maryland so I will spare you the statistics regarding death and drug overdoses. I'm sure you'll hear that from someone else during the hearing on this bill. But electronic prescribing is a tool that can help mitigate this epidemic.

In Maryland, law enforcement officials and investigators continue to deal with issues such as the stealing of prescription pads, illegal printing of prescriptions pads, alteration of the prescription, and patients seeing multiple physicians on the same day and getting multiple prescriptions filled. National statistics indicate that more than 10% of prescriptions are fraudulent diversions for opiates.

This problem is being addressed at the federal and state levels and Maryland is behind. At the federal level, legislation signed in 2018 requires mandatory e-prescribing for Medicare Part D by 2021. As part of a multipronged approach to attack this crisis, we should join the numerous other states that have adopted mandatory use of e-prescribing for controlled substances.

The General Assembly has made fighting the opioid crisis a priority but passing the mandatory use of e-prescribing for controlled substances has a chance to make a real and immediate impact on the access to opioids. We need to use every tool in the tool box to reverse this trend and make e-prescribing of controlled substances the law in our state.

Sincerely,



Erek L. Barron