



Larry Hogan, Governor · Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor · Dennis R. Schrader, Secretary
February 16, 2022

The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass
Chair, House Health and Government Operations Committee
Room 241, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: HB 408 – Statewide Targeted Overdose Prevention (STOP) Act of 2022 – Letter of Support

Dear Chair Pendergrass and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) respectfully submits this letter of support for House Bill (HB) 408 – Statewide Targeted Overdose Prevention (STOP) Act of 2022. HB 408 will authorize emergency medical service providers to dispense naloxone to individuals who received treatment for a nonfatal drug overdose or were evaluated by a crisis evaluation team. HB 408 will also require certain programs and entities, including homeless services programs, opioid treatment programs, and hospitals to create protocols for the dispensation of naloxone.

Naloxone is a life-saving medication that can reverse the effects of an opioid overdose and expanding access to naloxone is key to reducing opioid related fatalities. Maryland residents currently have access to naloxone from their local pharmacies by presenting a prescription written by a provider or by requesting naloxone under the Maryland Standing Order.¹ Maryland residents can also request naloxone from their local Overdose Response Program.

Research recommends making naloxone available at points of contact that serve high-risk individuals. If passed, HB 408 will bolster current naloxone distribution strategies in Maryland and help close the gap in availability at locations that serve high-risk clients, including behavioral health treatment programs, hospital emergency departments, homeless shelters, and correctional re-entry services.

For all these reasons, MDH fully supports HB 408 and respectfully requests the committee return a favorable report. If you would like to discuss this further, please contact Heather Shek, Director, Office of Governmental Affairs at (443) 695-4218 or heather.shek@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

Dennis R. Schrader
Secretary

¹ Under Maryland law (Health-General Article, Title 13, Subtitle 31, Code of Maryland), a physician employed by MDH may prescribe naloxone by issuing a standing order which authorizes dispensing to any individual who may be at risk of opioid overdose or in a position to assist someone experiencing an opioid overdose.