



**2022 SESSION
POSITION PAPER**

BILL: HB 408 – Statewide Targeted Overdose Prevention (STOP) Act of 2022
COMMITTEE: House – Health and Governmental Operations Committee
POSITION: Letter of Information

BILL ANALYSIS: House Bill (HB) 408 authorizes certain providers to dispense naloxone to individuals who received treatment for a nonfatal drug overdose or were evaluated by a crisis evaluation team, requires certain community services programs to dispense naloxone to certain individuals free of charge under certain circumstances and other related activities.

POSITION RATIONALE: The Maryland Association of County Health Officers (MACHO) acknowledges the effectiveness of Naloxone in preventing fatal opioid overdoses across the state of Maryland. As such, the state's Health Officers support the intention of HB 408. MACHO calls to the Committee's attention that if current federal funding ends at some point in the future, the original language of this bill would place the cost burden of Naloxone kits on local health departments (LHDs) and other non-profit agencies providing services for at-risk individuals. Local health departments do not have the financial means to independently finance such a program.

MACHO has had discussions with the leadership of the Opioid Operation Command Center to address costs of Naloxone kits if federal grant funding should cease. We have been informed that HB 408 will be amended to clarify that if federal funding ends, the Maryland Department of Health will assume financial responsibility for any Naloxone kits that LHDs are required to distribute under this bill. Once such an amendment is introduced, MACHO will support the bill.

The American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) cites studies linking increases in community access to naloxone with decreases in overdose deaths. Greater availability of naloxone is not associated with an increase in opioid use.¹ In a position statement, ASAM encourages the elimination of barriers to distribution of naloxone to those at risk of overdose and people close to them. HB 408 furthers the goal of reducing fatal opioid overdoses.

2020 and 2021 produced the highest numbers of overdose deaths in state history. HB 408 will strengthen one important component of a multi-layered strategy to accelerate progress in the statewide efforts to curb potentially preventable fatalities.

For these reasons, the Maryland Association of County Health Officers submits this letter of information for HB 408. For more information, please contact Ruth Maiorana, MACHO Executive Director at rmaiora1@jhu.edu or 410-937-1433. *This communication reflects the position of MACHO.*

¹<https://www.asam.org/docs/default-source/public-policy-statements/use-of-naloxone-for-the-prevention-of-opioid-overdose-deaths-final.pdf>

