

February 13, 2024

The Honorable Joseline Pena-Melnyk, Chairwoman  
House Government Operations  
Committee  
Maryland House of Delegates  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: HB 736 Support for Senate Bill 497 — Health Insurance and Maryland Medical Assistance  
Program — Coverage — Opioid Reversal Drugs and Products

Dear Chairwoman Pena-Melnyk and HGO Committee Members:

I write in support of House Bill 736 to require Maryland Medicaid Managed Care Plans cover Over-the-Counter Overdose Reversal Drugs like nasal naloxone.

I am a registered nurse in Maryland and have worked at Shepard Pratt and have seen firsthand patients prescribed opioids without understanding the dangers of opioids and the fact there is an antidote available. No medical professional believes that a patient in pain is going to misuse their prescription medication, but it happens every day. Naloxone is a key preventative life-saving product that has had both federal and state best practices surrounding its usage and access. With the new FDA approval of over the counter nasal naloxone, a new challenge for patients has arisen — affordable coverage.


Medicaid patients could get co-prescribed naloxone for I believe \$1 co-pay, but over-the-counter products can cost approximately \$45. In order to expand the access and ensure it is where it needs to be in the case of an emergency, having Medicaid cover OTC naloxone as it does the prescribed naloxone is an essential first step in making OTC naloxone affordable.

Currently I work with elderly patients that are dependent on opioids. While opioids are often needed for pain, there should be coverage for affordable OTC lifesaving overdose reversal medications antidotes as a preventative measure.

With the overdose rate continuing to soar and the rise of stronger opioids, we must look to better prevention. As a medical professional, I understand the multiple regulatory burden on providers, but we swear an oath to treat patients to the best of our ability. The Centers for Disease Control, Medicaid, and Maryland Department of Health have all stated coprescribing naloxone is a best practice for high strength opioids or when combined with a benzodiazepine; however with OTC naloxone, the time is now to continue access to affordable over the counter naloxone.

I urge your favorable support of HB 736 and SB497.

I urge your favorable support of HB 736 and SB497.



Nicole Lopez de Victoria, MSN, BSN, RN

5940 Leben Drive  
Frederick, MD 21703

443-944-6825

Nicole.lopezdevictoria@gmail.com