



Strengthening the Mid-Atlantic Region for Tomorrow

Four States, One Region, Infinite Possibilities

April 2, 2024

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

RE: Support for SB1099 - Emergency Services - Automated External Defibrillator and Naloxone Co-Location Initiative - Requirements for Public Buildings

Dear Chairwoman Pena-Melnyk and HGO Committee Members,

I write today as the Maryland Board Member for Strengthening the Mid-Atlantic Region for Tomorrow – SMART. SMART is a non-profit group which was started as a Congressional Initiative between the 40 members of Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware on legislative and policy issues affecting the Mid-Atlantic Region. SMART has 15 working groups comprised of industry and community leaders across the 4 states in healthcare, veteran's issues, and workforce development.

We are gravely concerned about the on-going opioid overdose epidemic and the rise of substance use disorder, due to the disproportionate impact on the region due to the I-95 corridor. SMART has been broadening the outreach with our healthcare working group to support consistent implementation of best practices across the region to combat this crisis. The opioid epidemic currently costs the nation over \$20 billion dollars annually, with \$1.5 billion in aid to states in the State Opioid Response Grant.

On December 21, 2023 the Biden-Harris Administration led by example and announced the historic step to recommend that every federal facility across the nation have life-saving naloxone available. According to Dr. Rahul Gupta, the Director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy stated “ we have worked to make overdose reversal medication more accessible and available then ever before. These lifesaving medications should be as readily available as fire extinguishers or defibrillators in all public spaces from schools to housing communities to restaurants, retail and other businesses”. In addition, the US Food and Drug Administration in January extended the shelf-life of Narcan from 3 year to 4 years, and in 2023, the FDA approved multiple Over the Counter community use naloxone products with an average cost of \$40-60. All of these efforts are designed to ensure the affordability and access to life-saving overdose reversal drugs and to ensure that they are available in locations for emergency use, like AED's and first aid kits.

Lastly, the Maryland's Opioid Restitution Fund has provided an opportunity to establish, promote, and sustain programs for the prevention and treatment of opioid use disorders. These programs, new and existing, are critical to overcoming the opioid epidemic. Overdose Reversal Medications would be an allowable use of the funds to help advance naloxone access and defray the cost for these public facilities.

SMART acknowledges, and applauds, Maryland for the great lengths taken to ensure a comprehensive approach to the crisis, however, remains concerned that inconsistent policies and protocols continue to keep Maryland near the highest overdose rate in the nation. Other states are New Hampshire and Georgia.

Thank you for your consideration of the passage of SB1099.

Sincerely,

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