



January 29, 2024

The Honorable Vanessa E. Atterbeary  
House Ways & Means Committee  
House Office Building - Room 131  
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Support - House Bill 1268: Educational Institutions – Opioid Overdose–Reversing Medications – Policy Requirements

Dear Chairman Atterbeary and Honorable Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Psychiatric Society (MPS) and the Washington Psychiatric Society (WPS) are state medical organizations whose physician members specialize in diagnosing, treating, and preventing mental illnesses, including substance use disorders. Formed more than sixty-five years ago to support the needs of psychiatrists and their patients, both organizations work to ensure available, accessible, and comprehensive quality mental health resources for all Maryland citizens; and strive through public education to dispel the stigma and discrimination of those suffering from a mental illness. As the district branches of the American Psychiatric Association covering the state of Maryland, MPS and WPS represent over 1000 psychiatrists and physicians currently in psychiatric training.

MPS/WPS support House Bill 1268: Educational Institutions – Opioid Overdose–Reversing Medications – Policy Requirements (HB 1268). Opioid overdose is a significant public health crisis in Maryland. Educational institutions have some responsibility in addressing this issue, particularly among young people who may be vulnerable to substance abuse. By updating drug addiction and prevention education programs to include information on naloxone and other opioid overdose-reversing medications, educational institutions can play a crucial role in preventing overdoses and saving lives. Providing students and staff with knowledge about these medications can help them respond effectively in emergency situations.

Furthermore, HB 1268 allows certain students, staff, and other individuals lawfully present on school property to possess naloxone or other opioid overdose-reversing medications. This permission is essential for ensuring prompt response to overdose emergencies. Additionally, providing immunity from liability for those aforementioned individuals who respond in good faith to a suspected overdose encourages prompt and effective action in emergency situations without fear of legal repercussions.

Finally, while the specific funding mechanism is not detailed in the bill, adequate funding is crucial for implementing and sustaining effective drug addiction prevention and response initiatives in educational institutions. MPS/WPS hope the Maryland General Assembly can allocate the appropriate funding to this initiative.



For all the reasons stated above, MPS/WPS ask this committee for a favorable report on HB 1268. If you have any questions regarding this testimony, please feel free to contact Thomas Tompsett Jr. at [tommy.tompsett@mdlobbyist.com](mailto:tommy.tompsett@mdlobbyist.com).

Respectfully submitted,  
The Maryland Psychiatric Society and the Washington Psychiatric Society  
Legislative Action Committee