



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

March 6, 2024

The Honorable Vanessa Atterbeary
Chair, House Ways and Means Committee
Room 131 House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

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

Dear Chair Atterbeary and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (Department) and the Maryland’s Office of Overdose Response submits this letter of support with amendments for House Bill (HB) 1268 – Educational Institutions – Opioid Overdose-Reversing Medications – Policy Requirements.

HB 1268 requires the State Board of Education, county boards of education, and institutions of higher education in Maryland to update certain drug education programs to include information on the mitigating effects of naloxone and other opioid overdose-reversing medications. Additionally, the bill authorizes certain individuals, including students, to carry naloxone on school property.

Students in Maryland must be armed with the information and tools necessary to prevent and respond to overdoses that occur in their communities. Fentanyl-related overdose deaths among people aged 25 and younger have increased by 374 percent from 2012 to 2021, according to the most recent finalized fatal overdose data from the Maryland Department of Health’s Vital Statistics Administration.¹ Our youth deserve to have all possible resources at their disposal, especially those that are evidence-based, safe, and effective. Naloxone is a safe and effective medication for reversing overdose. Even if Naloxone is administered when an overdose is not occurring, there is no harm. Students in schools are closest to the issue of youth overdose and must be empowered to be part of the solution to this issue. Teaching students about how naloxone works and how to respond to an overdose are vital components of addressing the issue of adolescent overdose mortality.

The Department and Maryland’s Office of Overdose Response supports the intent of this legislation. However, we request an amendment that training and education be provided specifically for the utilization of Naloxone, as found in the Maryland Statewide Standing Order for Opioid Overdose Reversal Drugs. The introduction of new reversal drugs in the school setting would require a significant amount of education and training, especially for reversal drugs that pose a clinical risk of more prolonged or severe withdrawal symptoms.

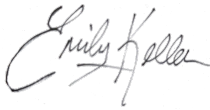
¹ https://health.maryland.gov/vsa/Documents/Overdose/2021_AnnualIntoxDeathReport.pdf

If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Sarah Case-Herron, Director of Governmental Affairs at sarah.case-herron@maryland.gov or (443) 826-1851.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Laura Herrera Scott".

Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H.
Secretary

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Emily Keller".

Emily Keller, Special Secretary of Overdose Response

AMENDMENT NO. 1

On page 2, line 11 through line 12 strike “OR OTHER OPIOID OVERDOSE–REVERSING MEDICATIONS”.

On page 2, line 26 through line 27 strike “or other OPIOID overdose–reversing medication”.

On page 2, line 31 strike “or other **OPIOID** overdose–reversing medication”

On page 3, in line 6 through line 7 strike beginning with “**OR**” “OR OTHER OPIOID OVERDOSE–REVERSING MEDICATION”.

On page 4, in line 10 strike “or other **OPIOID** overdose–reversing medication”

On page 4, in line 12 through line 13 strike “or other OPIOID overdose–reversing medication”.

On page 5, in line 11 through line 12 strike “or other overdose–reversing medication”.

On page 5, in line 15 through line 16 strike “OR OTHER OPIOID OVERDOSE–REVERSING MEDICATION”.

On page 5 in line 21 through line 22 strike “or other OPIOID overdose–reversing medications”.

On page 5, in line 26 through line 27 strike “OR OTHER OPIOID OVERDOSE–REVERSING MEDICATION”.

On page 6, in line 4 strike “or other **OPIOID** overdose–reversing medication”

RATIONAL:

The Maryland Statewide Standing Order for Opioid Overdose Reversal Drugs- issue date: March 23, 2023, utilizes Naloxone for prescription and dispensing. The introduction of new drugs in the school setting would require a significant amount of education and training, especially for reversal drugs that pose a clinical risk of more prolonged or severe withdrawal symptoms.