

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2021 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**First Reader**

House Bill 212  
Judiciary

(Delegate Cardin)

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**Criminal Procedure - Medical Emergency - Immunity**

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This bill makes several changes to provisions related to criminal immunity for providing, assisting, or seeking assistance for medical emergencies involving the ingestion or use of alcohol or drugs.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** The bill is not anticipated to materially affect State finances or operations.

**Local Effect:** The bill is not anticipated to materially affect local finances or operations.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Bill Summary/Current Law:** Pursuant to current law, the act of seeking, providing, or assisting with the provision of medical assistance for another person who is experiencing a medical emergency after ingesting or using alcohol or drugs may be used as a mitigating factor in a criminal prosecution of (1) the person who experienced the medical emergency or (2) any person who sought, provided, or assisted in the provision of medical assistance.

A person who, in good faith, seeks, provides, or assists with the provision of medical assistance for a person reasonably believed to be experiencing a medical emergency after ingesting or using alcohol or drugs must be immune from criminal arrest, charge, or prosecution for specified violations if the related evidence was obtained solely as a result of the person's seeking, providing, or assisting with the provision of medical assistance.

Currently, the same immunity applies to a person *who reasonably believes* that the person is experiencing a medical emergency after ingesting or using alcohol or drugs. The bill specifies that this immunity applies to a person *who is experiencing* a medical emergency, rather than a person *who reasonably believes* that the person is experiencing a medical emergency.

The specified violations referenced above are §§ 5-601 (possessing or administering a controlled dangerous substance), 5-619 (drug paraphernalia), 5-620 (controlled paraphernalia), 10-114 (underage possession and consumption of alcohol), 10-116 (obtaining alcohol for underage consumption), and 10-117 (furnishing or allowing underage consumption of alcohol) of the Criminal Law Article.

Under the bill, the applicable violations are §§ 5-602 (distributing, possession with intent to distribute, or dispensing a controlled dangerous substance) and 10-114 (underage possession and consumption of alcohol) of the Criminal Law Article or a misdemeanor offense.

Under current law, a person who seeks, provides, or assists with the provision of medical assistance in accordance with statute may not be sanctioned for a violation of a condition of pretrial release, probation, or parole if the evidence of the violation was obtained solely as a result of the person seeking, providing, or assisting with the provision of medical assistance. The bill extends application of this provision if the evidence of the violation was obtained solely as a result of the person *receiving* the provision of medical assistance.

Finally, the bill also establishes that a person who seeks, provides, or assists with the provision of medical assistance (or who is experiencing a medical emergency) in accordance with statute may not be detained or prosecuted in connection with an outstanding warrant for another nonviolent crime if the contact with the subject of the warrant was obtained solely as a result of the person seeking, providing, assisting with, or receiving the provision of medical assistance.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** HB 738 of 2020 received a hearing in the House Judiciary Committee, but no further action was taken. Its cross file, SB 849, received a hearing in the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee, but no further action was taken.

**Designated Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems; Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, and Montgomery counties; City of Bowie; Maryland State Commission on Criminal Sentencing Policy; Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts); Office of the Public Defender; Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services; Department of State Police; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - January 25, 2021  
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