



To: The Honorable Chair, Senator Delores Kelley, and members of the Finance Committee

From: Melissa S. Rock, Birth to Three Strategic Initiative Director &

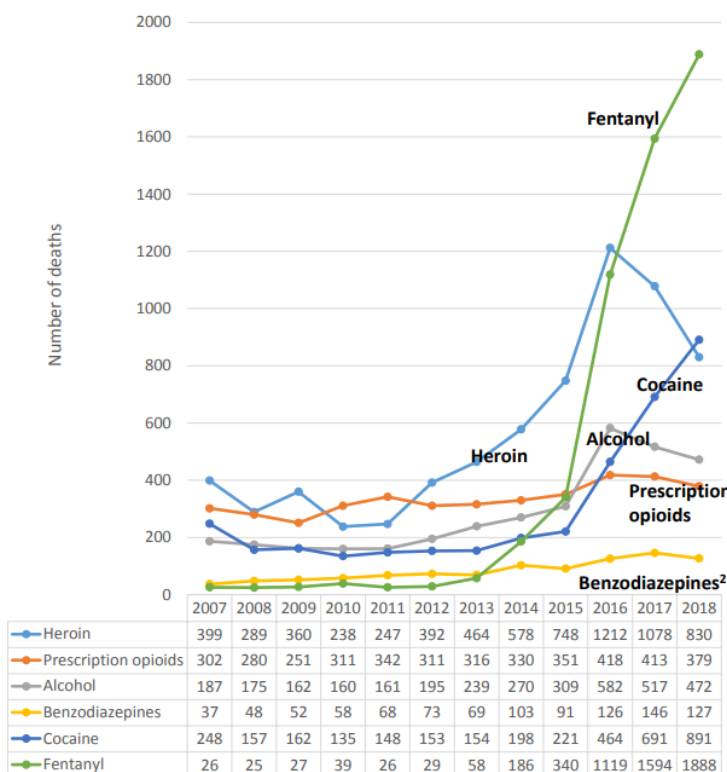
Re.: **SB 520: Behavioral Health Programs - Opioid Treatment Services - Limitation on Licenses**

Date: February 18, 2020

Position: **Oppose**

The opioid crisis stretches across all of Maryland. The graph below shows the numbers of drug and alcohol related deaths across Maryland from 2007-2018.ⁱ According to the University of Maryland Medical Center, “Harford County saw a 173 percent increase in opioid-related deaths from 2013 to 2017, and Baltimore City saw a 69 percent increase.... Opioid overdose is among the state's top four causes of death.”ⁱⁱ

Figure 5. Total Number of Drug- and Alcohol-Related Intoxication Deaths by Selected Substances¹, Maryland, 2007-2018.



¹Since an intoxication death may involve more than one substance, counts of deaths related to specific substances do not sum to the total number of deaths.

²Includes deaths caused by benzodiazepines and related drugs with similar sedative effects.

When determining the number of behavioral health programs that offer opioid treatment services in a county, it should be based on the number of individuals in that county who need to access treatment. SB 520 requires these licenses to be limited based on a county's total population. This could cause counties with larger populations in need of opioid substance use disorder treatment to have behavioral health facilities that are serving thousands of individuals, which is not best practice.

We need to ensure that the number of licenses for substance use disorder treatment is based on the number of individuals who need to access that treatment rather than a county's total population, and therefore urge this

committee to issue an unfavorable report on SB 520.

ⁱ Maryland Department of Health, “Unintentional Drug-and Alcohol-Related Intoxications Death in Maryland, 2018” at p. 14 (May 2019).

https://health.maryland.gov/vsa/Documents/Overdose/Annual_2018_Drug_Intox_Report.pdf

ⁱⁱ <https://www.umms.org/ummc/health-services/addiction/fighting-the-opioid-epidemic>