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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
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TESTIMONY OF SENATOR DELORES G. KELLEY

**REGARDING SENATE BILL 166 - DRUGS AND DEVICES - ELECTRONIC
PRESCRIPTIONS - CONTROLLED DANGEROUS SUBSTANCES**

BEFORE THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

ON FEBRUARY 20, 2020

Mr. Vice Chair and Members:

**Senate Bill 166 is here to add needed safety and security to the
prescribing of controlled dangerous substances, and to bring Maryland
prescribing practices in line with best practices in states which are ahead of us
on this important issue.**

**When it comes to the opioid crisis, many prescribers still prefer old
fashioned pen and paper. But pen and paper make it too hard to stop this**

healthcare problem. I know all of you are well-aware of the enormity of this crisis in Maryland so I will spare you the statistics regarding death and drug overdoses. I'm sure you'll hear that from someone else during the hearing on this bill. But electronic prescribing is a tool that can help mitigate this epidemic, and that is mandated by SB 166.

In Maryland, law enforcement officials and investigators continue to deal with issues such as the stealing of prescription pads, illegal printing of prescription pads, alteration of prescriptions, and patients seeing multiple physicians on the same day and getting multiple prescriptions filled. National statistics indicate that more than 10% of prescriptions are fraudulent diversions for opiates. Elsewhere this problem is being addressed at the federal and state levels, but Maryland is far behind. At the federal level, legislation signed in 2018 requires mandatory e-prescribing for Medicare Part D by 2021. Therefore as part of a multipronged approach to attack this crisis, we should join the numerous other states that have adopted mandatory use of e-prescribing for controlled substances.

The General Assembly has made fighting the opioid crisis a priority, and mandating the use of e-prescribing for controlled substances has a chance to make a real and immediate impact on stopping opioid abuse. We need to use every tool in the tool box to reverse this trend and make e-prescribing of controlled substances the law in our state.

Electronic prescribing reduces errors. Such prescriptions cannot be altered or copied, and are electronically trackable. When New York State moved to its electronic prescribing mandate for all controlled and dangerous substances, there was an immediate 70% drop in the rate of lost or stolen prescription forms. Electronic prescribing also reduces greatly the number of prescriptions that go unfilled and improves patient adherence to needed medication schedules, so that patient outcomes are better. Electronic prescribing saves time, and unnecessary patient travel to the prescriber's office to pick up a hard copy of a prescription, while reducing errors related to unclear handwriting of the prescriber.

Finally, in 2018, Congress enacted federal legislation requiring that prescriptions for controlled substances covered under Medicare Part D be electronically transmitted by 2021. Colleagues, lets follow suit for all controlled substances prescribed in Maryland. Let's give a favorable report to SB 166.
