

JACK BAILEY
Legislative District 29
Calvert and St. Mary's Counties

Education, Health, and
Environmental Affairs Committee



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
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Senate Bill 710 – Health - General - Prescription Drug Monitoring Program - County Health Officer

Dear Chairwoman Kelley and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to introduce Senate Bill 710 - Health - General - Prescription Drug Monitoring Program - County Health Officer. This bill would give each county's health officer the ability to access the State's Prescription Drug Monitoring Program for specific purposes. The General Assembly has taken a number of steps over the last several years to fight the opioid epidemic that has ravaged our communities and taken the lives of far too many of our fellow Marylanders. I believe this bill will give our State another tool in our effort to combat this crisis.

After discussing this issue with public health experts and working with the local health officer in St. Mary's County, I believe that it would be helpful if local health officers could have access to specific data contained in the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program to be able to record trends in prescriber data that could indicate potential abuse in the system. I believe very strongly that we need to support our health officers in their effort to stop opioid abuse in Maryland at the source of the problem. This is one way in which our State government can provide access to an already established tool to support the fight against the opioid crisis and help prevent opioid abuse within our community.

The intent of this legislation is not to prosecute or sanction doctors for their prescribing habits. There are no penalties in this bill for prescribers who may be flagged during review. It is simply to allow health officers to monitor the distribution of these dangerous drugs and to have the opportunity to simply educate doctors prescribing this medication in their communities. To this end, I have introduced an amendment which clarifies that the purpose of the health officers' access to this data is to educate prescribers whose prescription drug monitoring data identifies the prescriber as prescribing significantly higher amounts of monitored prescription drugs relative to other prescribers in the same field or specialty.

I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 710 with the amendment I have offered. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Bailey".

Senator Jack Bailey
District 29
Calvert and St. Mary's Counties