



**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE
SENATE BILL 710**

Health – General – Prescription Drug Monitoring Program – County Health Officer

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For the Maryland Association of County Health Officers (MACHO)
*Position: Support Sponsor Amendment – March 5, 2020***

The Maryland Association of County Health Officers (MACHO) **supports the sponsor-amended version of SB 710.** This bill provides local health departments the means to educate providers in their communities who prescribe significantly higher amounts of controlled dangerous substances than their peers. Unintentional overprescribing by well-intended clinicians continues to infuse opioids and benzodiazepines into communities across Maryland. *There is not a current, practical mechanism to identify and educate these providers.*

Maryland has one of the highest prescription-related opioid death rates in the nation. In 2017, 711 deaths involving prescription opioids occurred in Maryland – a rate of 11.5 per 100,000 persons. This rate was more than twice the 2017 national rate of 5.2.¹ *SB 710 will allow for much needed evidence-based education for prescribers at the local level.*

A newer method of prescription drug monitoring program (PDMP) based education is to present providers with a ranking of his/her controlled dangerous substances (CDS) prescriptions relative to peers in the same specialty.² Local health officials intend to use PDMP data for *education* purposes **only**, not for legal or law enforcement purposes. This intention aligns with the American Medical Association's recommendation that information obtained from PDMPs first be used for education of specific physicians *prior to any civil or criminal action.*³

Since local health departments do not have law enforcement authority regarding prescribing habits, they are well positioned to improve prescriber behavior through *non-threatening, community-oriented, public health education.*

Further, SB 710 aligns with the PDMP's new Academic Detailing program that aims to improve prescribers' CDS awareness and education.

For more information, please contact Ruth Maiorana, MACHO Executive Director at rmaiora1@jhu.edu or 410-614-6891. This communication reflects the position of MACHO.

¹ https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/67/wr/mm675152e1.htm?s_cid=mm675152e1_w

¹ http://www.pdmpassist.org/pdf/Report_Card_TAG_20160315_final.pdf

¹ <https://policysearch.ama-assn.org/policyfinder/detail/H-95.947?uri=%2FAMADoc%2FHOD.xml-0-5326.xml>