

Mark O'Brien
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February 27, 2020

Health and Government Operations Committee
Attn: Chair Shane E. Pendergrass

House Bill 611

Thank you for your work to address the opioid crisis in our state. I am writing today in support of HB 611, but with amendments. I am a resident of Baltimore County and a past Director of Opioid Overdose Prevention for the Baltimore City Health Department. Since leaving my role at the Baltimore City Health Department, I've had the privilege of working in states and communities across the country to support efforts to address substance use disorders. In these roles, I have met too many families who have lost loved ones because of the addiction crisis. But I've also gotten to see how communities come together to address the problem. One critical element for addressing addiction is improving coordination of care and treatment capacity.

HB 611 would create a pilot program to implement a Hub and Spokes system of care for opioid use disorder in Baltimore County. Such a system has been proven to be effective in other jurisdictions in improving coordination of care, treatment capacity, and, most importantly, treatment outcomes. It's a critical step forward for our state.

However, the current legislation does not include access to all forms of treatment for opioid use disorder. Medication-assisted treatment (MAT) is the gold standard for treatment of opioid addiction. When it comes to opioid use disorder, we are fortunate to have three FDA-approved medications to use in combination with counseling to treat addiction. Different medications work for different patients and sometimes for the same patient at different times in their journey to recovery. HB 611 should include provisions to include access to all MAT and ensure the hub can provide inpatient detoxification. These amendments would ensure patient centered care and a pathway for each medication.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Signature

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark O'Brien', enclosed in a circular scribble.

Mark O'Brien
CEO
Springlake Solutions, LLC