



House Judiciary Committee
February 11, 2020
Support of House Bill 524

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2019 - 2021

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The Maryland Association for the Treatment of Opioid Dependence (MATOD) urges a favorable opinion on HB 524.

Providers in MATOD are utilizing the gold standard in addiction medicine to treat opioid addiction, medication assisted treatment. This protocol is critical for our most vulnerable patients – pregnant women. Studies have shown the most effective and safe treatment protocol for a pregnant patient with an opioid use disorder to deliver a healthy baby is through stabilization of Medication in conjunction with cognitive behavioral therapies. MATOD can offer its patients this high level of care, but this ability is lost when a patient enters the prison systems.

MATOD cannot emphasize strongly enough the absolute necessity for pregnant woman to be screened, treated, and most importantly maintained on their medication when they enter the prison system. It is malpractice to not allow these women access to the medication that has been medically proven to offer the greatest chance of a successful pregnancy. Even one day of withdrawal symptoms brought on by the lack of the patient's medication can do irreparable harm.

MATOD has unfortunately heard of countless examples of woman being forced into withdrawal in detention centers due to regulation, mismanagement, and outright denial of the medication they need. This law will be a positive step forward to provide pregnant woman the standard of care for themselves and their future children that is universally agreed upon as the safest treatment protocol for mother and child.

MATOD thanks the General Assembly for passing legislation last year to roll out the use of medication assisted treatment for all people in local jails by 2023. We urge a favorable opinion on HB 524 to speed up the provision of services to pregnant women.

MATOD members include community and hospital based Opioid Treatment Programs, local Health Departments, local Addiction and Behavioral Health Authorities and Maryland organizations that support evidence-based Medication Assisted Treatment. MATOD members include thousands of highly trained and dedicated addiction counselors, clinical social workers, physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, nurses, peer recovery specialists and dedicated staff who work every day to save and transform lives.