



*Larry Hogan, Governor · Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor · Dennis R. Schrader, Acting Secretary*

February 2, 2021

The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass  
Chair, Health and Government Operations Committee  
Room 241, House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**RE: HB 29 - Health - Standards for Involuntary Admissions and Petitions for Emergency Evaluation - Substance Use Disorder – Letter of Information**

Dear Chair Pendergrass and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) respectfully submits this letter of information on House Bill 29 (HB 29) – Health - Standards for Involuntary Admissions and Petitions for Emergency Evaluation - Substance Use Disorder.

HB 29 amends provisions of Title 10 of the Health-General Article to allow the emergency evaluation and involuntary admissions of persons with substance use disorders to facilities who provide care for those with mental disorders and are not necessarily equipped to provide substance use disorder (SUD) treatment. MDH-licensed programs that are properly equipped to provide SUD treatment are not appropriate for involuntary admissions because they rely on consent. Treatment modalities for SUD differ from mental health disorders in that treatment focuses on patient engagement for addressing the underlying substance use disorder as opposed to consent for treatment of acute intoxication or overdose. Involuntary treatment in mental health is intended to address acute episodes but not long-term treatment of the condition. Additionally, these facilities are not necessarily locked and therefore may not have the necessary security measures in place to accommodate involuntary admissions.

If HB 29 is passed, MDH will need to revise its regulations to implement the new substance use criteria separate from mental health diagnosis given clinical distinctions. It would require construction/renovations to buildings to meet security needs and the increase in number of patients. Lastly, additional staff would need to be hired to accommodate the anticipated increase in evaluations and patients.



I hope this information is useful. If you would like to discuss this further, please contact me at [webster.ye@maryland.gov](mailto:webster.ye@maryland.gov) or Deputy Director of Governmental Affairs, Heather Shek, at 410-260-3190 or [heather.shek@maryland.gov](mailto:heather.shek@maryland.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Webster Ye". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Webster" being more legible than the last name "Ye".

Webster Ye  
Assistant Secretary, Health Policy