



March 2, 2021

**RE: HB 1125 –Prescription Drug Monitoring Program – Prescribers of Opioids – Notification Requirement. Beitzel**

Dear Chairwoman Pendergrass and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for your leadership during this time of crisis. The Maryland General Assembly should be commended for its appropriateness during an active public health pandemic and a time of human rights turmoil. The need to address these sobering truths is a critical component of all administrations as we move through 2021 and beyond.

For 22 years, Emergent has been addressing public health threats we face every day, from Anthrax poisoning, smallpox infections, to the opioid crisis, and now COVID-19. In response, we are steadfastly focused on ensuring access to existing products as well as developing new solutions. We are, also, excited to be partnering with the US Government to assist in the COVID-19 manufacturing process at our Bayview site, in our home state of Maryland.

Unfortunately, we are addressing a dual public health crisis with the opioid epidemic and COVID-19. Both have challenges and a need for expediting solutions. The most recent data available from the Center for Disease Control, indicates that approximately 81,230 drug overdose deaths occurred in the United States in the 12-months ending in May 2020. The increases in drug overdose deaths appear to have accelerated during the COVID-19 pandemic. The causes are a myriad and – as many have noted – this pandemic is both a public and mental health crisis.

Also, recently reported in October 2020 by Pew Charitable Trust, headlined "[Expanded Access to Naloxone Can Curb Opioid Overdose Deaths](#)," sheds light on needed legislation. And following, in December 2020, the CDC released a Health Alert, providing specific recommendations to reduce risk and expand prevention. We are in support of policies that create solutions to this cause. This is the reason we provide you with this letter of support to HB1125. We believe expanding access to life saving resources and education, as well as the removal of barriers that decrease stigma associated with substance use disorder is important. By expanding the provision and use of naloxone as well as overdose prevention educations, this bill is a step forward.

We believe the dual crisis of COVID-19 and opioid overdoses can be addressed concurrently. Just as was done with COVID-19, we strongly encourage your passage of HB1125.

Most sincerely,

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