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SB 394 – Statewide Targeted Overdose Prevention (STOP) Act of 2022

Position: *Support*
February 17, 2022
Senate Finance Committee

Bill Summary

SB 394 would require hospitals, on or before June 30, 2024, to dispense Naloxone, free of charge, to a patient who received treatment for a substance abuse disorder, opioid use disorder, or nonfatal drug overdose event.

MedStar Health's Position

Drug overdoses have become a serious public health challenge in Maryland and across the country. The Maryland Department of Health statistics show state overdose deaths from opioids continues to rise. From January to September 2016, there were 317 opioids overdose deaths, up from 270 in 2015. More concerning is the spike in heroin and fentanyl use, two cheaper, more easily obtainable alternatives for opioid users. Deaths from those drugs during the same period more than doubled, rising to 1,656 in 2016 from 726 in 2015. In 2020 the number of fatal overdoses reached 2,799, an increase of 17.7 percent from the prior year and the largest annual total in Maryland's history. In the first six months of 2021, there were 1,217 fatal opioid overdoses representing an increase of 1.2 percent from the first six months of 2020.

Naloxone is a medicine that rapidly reverses an opioid overdose. It attaches to the opioid receptors and reverses and blocks the effects of other opioids. Naloxone can quickly restore normal breathing to a person if their breathing has slowed or stopped because of an overdose and should be given to any person who shows signs of an opioid overdose or when an overdose is suspected. It has proven extremely effective in preventing overdose fatalities. Equipping patients who have experienced a nonfatal overdose with Naloxone is an important public health tool to prevent potential future fatal overdoses to those at high risk.

For the reasons listed above, we respectfully ask that you give SB 394 a ***favorable*** report.

It's how we treat people.