



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

March 23, 2022

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

RE: SB 196 – Maryland Department of Health – Overdose Report – Letter of Support

Dear Chair Pendergrass and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) is submitting this letter of support for Senate Bill (SB) 196 – Maryland Department of Health – Overdose Report.

In 2018, the Maryland General Assembly passed House Bill (HB) 922 (Chapter 211 of the Acts of 2018), which requires the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) to produce an annual overdose report on fatal overdoses involving opioids and other controlled substances through July 31, 2022. Following the passage of this legislation, MDH laid the foundation for this annual report. In January 2021, recognizing the need to prioritize this work, the Governor's Office identified the Opioid Operations Command Center (OOCC) as the lead agency to produce the overdose report. Since then, the Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) has worked collaboratively with OOCC and jointly created the Data-Informed Overdose Risk Mitigation (DORM) project to execute MDH's responsibilities under HB 922 (Chapter 211).

SB 196 would extend the sunset date of this legislation by two years through July 31, 2024. This will allow BHA and OOCC to continue to collaborate to enhance MDH's ability to use existing administrative datasets to understand overdose trends, risk and protective factors, and inform the state's opioid response strategy.

If you would like to discuss this further, please contact Heather Shek, Director, Office of Governmental Affairs at 410-767-5282 or heather.shek@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dennis R. Schrader".

Dennis R. Schrader
Secretary