



LARRY HOGAN
GOVERNOR

STATE HOUSE
100 STATE CIRCLE
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401-1925
(410) 974-3901
(TOLL FREE) 1-800-811-8336

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Senate Bill 394 - Statewide Targeted Overdose Prevention (STOP) Act of 2022

Position: Favorable as Amended

March 30, 2022

Keiffer J. Mitchell, Jr., Chief Legislative Officer

Jake Whitaker, Deputy Legislative Officer

Dear Chair Pendergrass, Vice Chair Peña-Melnyk, and Members of the Committee,

We respectfully submit this letter of support for Senate Bill 394 - Statewide Targeted Overdose Prevention (STOP) Act of 2022 as amended.

The Statewide Targeted Overdose Prevention (STOP) Act of 2022 will ensure that FDA-approved overdose reversal drugs, like naloxone (which safely and effectively reverses opioid-related overdoses), are made available to those at greatest risk of overdose. The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a nation-wide increase in opioid overdoses and deaths, and the need for targeted access to overdose reversal drugs has never been greater. The STOP Act will increase access to life-saving opioid reversal drugs that prevent death, allowing people to be connected with treatment and other resources.

The STOP Act requires that health care facilities and other entities, including hospital emergency departments, treatment facilities, homeless service providers, and correctional facilities make FDA-approved overdose reversal drugs available to individuals at risk of an opioid overdose. Naloxone is a fast-acting opioid overdose reversal drug and is most effective when readily-accessible to people who are likely to experience or witness an overdose. Expanding access to naloxone is key to reducing opioid-related fatalities.

This bill closes the gap on the availability of FDA-approved overdose reversal drugs for Marylanders at highest risk of opioid overdose who are engaging with the behavioral health treatment system, are recently released from correctional services, recently received treatment for an overdose at an emergency department or through emergency medical services, and those experiencing homelessness. Entities named in this bill were identified based on research and findings presented in the Data-Informed Overdose Risk Mitigation 2020 Annual Report, which linked individual-level death records from overdose decedents to systems-level datasets to develop overdose risk profiles.

Since taking office, Governor Hogan and Lieutenant Governor Rutherford have remained committed to addressing the heroin and opioid epidemic, including expanding access to critical behavioral health and substance use disorder treatment services. SB 394 is another important step in eliminating barriers to behavioral health services and treatments in Maryland.

For these reasons, we respectfully request a favorable report on SB 394 as amended.



