



## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

March 9, 2023

The Honorable William C. Smith Jr.  
Chair, Judicial Proceedings Committee  
2 East, Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

### **RE: SB 546 – Criminal Procedure - Medical Emergency - Immunity – Letter of Information**

Dear Chair Smith:

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) respectfully submits this letter of information for Senate Bill (SB) 546– Criminal Procedure - Medical Emergency - Immunity. This bill addresses legal protections for people experiencing an opioid overdose or another medical emergency resulting from drug or alcohol consumption.

Over 200 lives are lost to unintentional overdose in Maryland each month.<sup>1</sup> The potential for criminal charges can deter Marylanders from calling 911 to seek necessary medical assistance in an overdose emergency.<sup>2</sup> SB 546 will address this concern and enable people to seek necessary medical attention in an overdose emergency. The change will address a long-standing gap in Maryland’s otherwise comprehensive Good Samaritan Law (Annotated Code of Maryland, Criminal Procedure §1-210) by providing persons experiencing a medical emergency with explicit immunity.

If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Megan Peters, Acting Director of Governmental Affairs at [megan.peters@maryland.gov](mailto:megan.peters@maryland.gov) or (410) 260-3190.

Sincerely,

Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H.  
Secretary

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<sup>1</sup> Maryland Opioid Operational Command Center (O OCC). (2023). Maryland Overdose Data Dashboard. Retrieved Feb. 2, 2023, from <https://beforeitstoolate.maryland.gov/oocc-data-dashboard/>

<sup>2</sup> López, A. M. et al. (2019). Statewide Ethnographic Assessment of Drug Use and Services (SEADS) - Statewide Report. University of Maryland, Maryland Department of Health, and Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. Retrieved Feb. 2, 2023, from <https://anth.umd.edu/project/statewide-ethnographic-assessment-drug-use-and-services-%28seads%29>