

## Senate Bill 914

### “The Josh Siems Act” - Hospitals - Overdoses - Testing for Fentanyl

**Individual Providing Testimony:** Priscilla Barton-Metcalf, Student – Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health;

**Position:** Favorable.

Dear Chair Griffith,

I am voicing my support for SB914.

**It would be fiscally and ethically irresponsible to continue enabling willful ignorance of the scope of a problem that has already killed more Americans than were killed in WWII.<sup>1 2</sup>**

The rapid urine fentanyl test costs \$0.75. This is an extremely cost effective way to gather information critical to informing an effective public health response.

**This bill does not seek to legislate clinical practice.** Only after a clinician has ordered a toxicology screen on their own volition does this bill apply. Furthermore, the bill imposes no limitations on clinical decision making based on the results of a rapid urine fentanyl test. Results of these tests may empower clinicians to make different decisions in the presence of more complete information, but those decisions will be made on clinicians’ own volition based on professional judgement, best practices, and standard of care. This bill seeks to obtain and provide accurate vital statistics and morbidity and mortality data of crucial importance to public health in Maryland and beyond. This information will not only enable individuals and families in Maryland to make informed decisions about healthcare and risk management but will also inform public health prevention and response efforts.

Sincerely,

Priscilla Barton-Metcalf

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Veterans Affairs. America’s Wars. May 2021 [https://www.va.gov/opa/publications/factsheets/fs\\_americas\\_wars.pdf](https://www.va.gov/opa/publications/factsheets/fs_americas_wars.pdf) Congressional Research Service. American War and Military Operations Casualties: Lists and Statistics July 29, 2020 Page 2 <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/RL/RL32492>

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. National Center for Health Statistics Vital Statistics Rapid Release

