



Senate Bill 954

Overdose Response Program – Opioid Overdose Reversal Drugs – Choice of Formulation and Dosage

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Finance Committee

Date: March 21, 2023

From: Sarah Sample

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** SB 954. This bill would require the Maryland Department of Health to authorize local programs to treat and reverse overdoses to choose their preferred formulation of medication for these purposes.

Local health departments are at the forefront of mitigation and remediation efforts to restore communities that continue to be harmed by the opioid epidemic. With the surge in fentanyl usage, which is a particularly potent opioid, previous overdose reversal medications can be rendered ineffective depending on the use case. As challenges like this continue to evolve, it is vital that treatment methods keep up, and this legislation would certainly further that cause.

With a stronger tool for overdose reversal programs, local health departments will be better equipped to manage the deadly and unprecedented flood of fentanyl cases especially where local teams are finding that the current single dosage amounts are not sufficient to reverse an overdose. While a free option for reversal drugs through the existing Opioid Overdose Response Program is beneficial, counties want to make sure the treatment methods are keeping pace with the problem. This legislation ensures counties can respond to the new challenges with new solutions.

Overdose prevention programs are a key strategy for ensuring as few lives as possible will be lost to this ongoing crisis. Allowing local health departments and community programs the ability to specify the drugs, dosage, and formulations that are seen to be effective in their communities will bolster their ability to save lives. Accordingly, MACo requests a **FAVORABLE** report on SB 954.