

## House Bill 811

### Hospitals - Overdoses - Testing

**Individual Providing Testimony:** Caroline Clancy - MSN, RN, Medical Intensive Care Unit

**Position:** Favorable.

Dear Health and Government Operations Committee,

As an ICU nurse, I have the unfortunate perspective of witnessing our nation's opioid epidemic first hand, but specifically in Maryland. Data shows that an overwhelming majority of overdoses - fatal and nonfatal - in the state of Maryland are caused by fentanyl. Even still, fentanyl itself does not appear on the standard 5 panel drug screen that is used in most hospitals upon admission for suspected overdose.

While the screening of fentanyl upon admission is a complicated issue, we are not able to understand the full scope of the epidemic in Maryland if accurate data collection practices are not in place. HB 811 will be pivotal in gathering that data in order for public health policy officials to create programs to address the crisis, alert communities to overdose spikes, and provide insight for patients who have unknowingly ingested fentanyl.

Some hospitals in Maryland have already voluntarily included fentanyl in their standard urine drug screen after seeing its prevalence in patients admitted to the emergency department for suspected overdose. Others, however, have yet to take action – this policy will close that gap. Fentanyl testing reagents are affordable, costing average of \$0.75/each, and are easily integrated into current urine drug testing protocols.

HB 811 offers a commonsense, cost-effective way to navigate the fentanyl crisis. This bill has my full support and I encourage the committee to give this legislation its full support.

Sincerely,

Caroline Clancy, MSN, RN