



February 29, 2024

The Honorable Brian Feldman
Education, Energy, & the Environment Committee
2 West – Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Support – Senate Bill 1099: Emergency Services - Automated External Defibrillator and Naloxone Co-Location Initiative - Requirements for Public Buildings

Dear Chairman Feldman and Honorable Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Psychiatric Society (MPS) and the Washington Psychiatric Society (WPS) are state medical organizations whose physician members specialize in diagnosing, treating, and preventing mental illnesses, including substance use disorders. Formed more than sixty-five years ago to support the needs of psychiatrists and their patients, both organizations work to ensure available, accessible, and comprehensive quality mental health resources for all Maryland citizens; and strive through public education to dispel the stigma and discrimination of those suffering from a mental illness. As the district branches of the American Psychiatric Association covering the state of Maryland, MPS and WPS represent over 1000 psychiatrists and physicians currently in psychiatric training.

MPS/WPS support House Bill 1099: Emergency Services - Automated External Defibrillator and Naloxone Co-Location Initiative - Requirements for Public Buildings (SB 1099). The Maryland Office of Overdose Response reports that 2,513 fatal overdoses occurred in Maryland from October 2022 to September 2023. In the previous twelve months to that, 2,549 fatal overdoses occurred in Maryland. Opioids were by far and away the primary driver of said overdoses. Also worth noting is that in the twelve months ending in September 2023, compared to the twelve months ending in September 2022, there were 1.2% fewer emergency medical services (EMS) naloxone administrations in Maryland, decreasing from 9,018 to 8,909. However, in the twelve months ending in September 2023, compared to the twelve months ending in September 2022, there were 6.5% more non-fatal, opioid-related hospital emergency department visits, increasing from 8,864 to 9,437.

The numbers are clear, opioid overdoses continue to be a significant public health concern for Maryland, with thousands of deaths still occurring each year. Thus, making naloxone and similar overdose reversal medications readily available can help prevent fatalities and reduce the burden on EMS. Many states have enacted laws to expand access to naloxone and similar overdose reversal medications, recognizing their importance in combating the opioid epidemic. SB 1099 would simply require public facilities to have naloxone stored with AEDs and provide civil immunity for citizens who administer naloxone. This is sound public policy.



Therefore, for all the reasons above, MPS and WPS ask the committee for a favorable report on SB 1099. If you have any questions with regard to this testimony, please feel free to contact Thomas Tompsett Jr. at tommy.tompsett@mdlobbyist.com.

Respectfully submitted,
The Maryland Psychiatric Society and the Washington Psychiatric Society
Legislative Action Committee