

Dear Committee Members,

Animal Policy Group (APG) represents the animal health community, providing a voice to over 90,000 veterinary professionals. I am writing in regard to MD SB235, scheduled for a hearing with your committee 1/24/24. **We respectfully ask that this bill not be passed as written.**

We appreciate the work Maryland, and all states, are doing to address the opioid epidemic. The creation of a prescription drug monitoring program (PDMP/PMP) was a significant step in addressing opioid abuses.

States are still struggling to get the PMPs fully implemented and continue to encounter issues on the human health side. **The majority of states elected not to include veterinarians in their PMP requirements, and a handful of states have recently removed veterinarians from their PMP.** Alabama and Louisiana removed veterinarians in 2018, Illinois in 2019, West Virginia in 2021, and Alaska in 2023. No state has added veterinarians to the PMP since adoption of a system.

The chance of humans abusing animal drugs is rather low and there have been no recent reports of such activity. **The veterinary profession faces its own struggles complying with the PMP requirements, most notably veterinary medical systems are not tied to human health systems.** Many states have faced the same struggles in implementing a veterinary PMP system, and we encourage the legislature to follow suit by excluding veterinarians from the PMP until there is a more appropriate time for their inclusion.

We thank you for your time on this issue and please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions.

Best,

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