

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 HB57, scheduled for a hearing with your committee 1/31/24. **We respectfully ask that this bill not be passed.**

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 their 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 PMP system was designed to curb the abuse of controlled substances for human patients and does not translate neatly for veterinarian use. **The veterinary profession faces struggles complying with the PMP requirements, most notably veterinary medical systems are not tied to human health systems.** The industry is not equipped with the same level of standardized reporting processes. Many states have discovered the challenges of implementing a veterinary PMP system, and we encourage the legislature to exclude 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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