testimony FAV SB875 animal tranq 2025.pdf
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Emily Tarsell, LCPC

2314 Benson Mill Road
Sparks, Maryland 21152
March 6, 2025

Favorable SB 875 (HB 1109)
Public Health – Medetomidine and Xylazine Consumer Protection Act

Dear Chairwoman Beidle and Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

I am Emily Tarsell, a mother, licensed therapist and founder of Health Choice Maryland. The mission of our organization is to promote education for informed medical choice and health freedom. In keeping with that mission, we ask your Favorable report for SB 875 (HB1109), a bill regarding certain prohibitions against the sale, distribution, exposure and use of medetomidine and xylazine, particularly for those under the age of 21 years.

Medetomidine and xylazine are veterinary tranquilizer products that can cause adverse effects including slowed heart rate, low blood pressure and decreases in brain and spinal cord activity. It is not approved for use in people

However, medetomidine like xylazine may be increasingly found in the illicit drug supply and are resulting in central nervous system depression and over dose deaths.

Most of us are totally unaware of the use of these products by humans so public education needs to increase. BThis bill with its prohibitions and penalties would result in increased awareness of illicit use of these drugs. We urge the Committee to vote **Favorable for SB875.** Thank you.

Emily Tarsell, LCPC

SB875 LOSWA.pdf
Uploaded by: Irnise Williams
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March 4, 2025

TO: The Honorable Pamela Beidle, Chair
Finance Committee

FROM: Irnise F. Williams, Deputy Director, Health Education and Advocacy Unit

RE: Senate Bill 0875- Public Health - Medetomidine and Xylazine Consumer Protection Act- **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS**

The Health Education and Advocacy Unit supports, with amendments Senate Bill 875. This bill will help address the public health dangers of illicit medetomidine and xylazine while preserving its availability as an important drug for use in veterinary medicine. Medetomidine and Xylazine are veterinary tranquilizers that have been identified in overdose deaths as adulterants to fentanyl, increasing the chances of overdose, and don't respond to naloxone.[1] This bill would prohibit retailers from selling these products without proof of the purchaser's intent for institutional, veterinary, or scientific use, and establishes a minimum age requirement of 21 years for buyers. Violations of these regulations could result in civil penalties; $3,000 for first offenses and $6,500 for each subsequent violation. SB875 is a necessary step to curb the misuse of these potent and dangerous substances, which have been linked to increasing incidents of overdoses.

Medetomidine is a canine anesthetic drug, not approved for human use (although one of its isomers, dexmedetomidine, is used in hospitals as a sedative and analgesic), and is much more potent than xylazine, and slows heart rates substantially. Xylazine, referred to as "tranq" or "tranq dope," is a non-opioid sedative, is not approved for use in people, and was declared an emerging threat by the White House's Office of National Drug Control Policy.[2] When used in people, xylazine can cause sedation, difficulty breathing, dangerously low blood pressure, slowed heart rate, severe withdrawal symptoms, wounds that become infected, including long-term severe flesh

[1] The Growing Threat of Xylazine and its Mixture with Illicit Drugs https://www.dea.gov/sites/default/files/2022-12/The%20Growing%20Threat%20of%20Xylazine%20and%20its%20Mixture%20with%20Illicit%20Drugs.pdf

[2] White House's Office of National Drug Control Policy https://www.cdc.gov/overdose-prevention/about/what-you-should-know-about-xylazine.html

wounds in survivors that can lead to amputations, and death. These products are being illegally diverted from veterinarian supplies or medications intended for hospital use or being formulated by drug gangs from precursor chemicals acquired illegally.[3] According to the Center for Forensic Science Research and Education (CFSRE), the drug was first detected at the end of 2022 in Maryland, followed by Missouri, Colorado, Pennsylvania, and California in 2023.[4] There have been growing concerns nationally over their misuse and potential health risks.

This is an important bill to address yet more psychoactive substances appearing in the illicit drug market, and to protect Marylanders from the significant risks associated with these substances. Given these risks, we propose consideration of an earlier effective date. We do offer some amendments to clarify the scope of this bill.

We urge a favorable report with these amendments.

cc: The Honorable William G. Folden

[3] NPR: Gangs mix another potent sedative into U.S. street drugs causing 'mass overdoses'

[4] Medetomidine Rapidly Proliferating Across USA — Implicated In Recreational Opioid Drug Supply & Causing Overdose Outbreaks https://www.cfsre.org/nps-discovery/public-alerts/medetomidine-rapidly-proliferating-across-usa-implicated-in-recreational-opioid-drug-supply-causing-overdose-outbreaks

HEAU Amendments

Amendment No. 1

On page 2, in line 26, after "PRODUCTS" strike "**AND**" and substitute **"OR**"

Rationale: A retailer may be selling one product and not the other and we want to ensure this provision still applies in that situation.

Amendment No. 2

On page 3, in line 13, strike "**OR**"

Amendment No. 3

On page 3, in line 13, after "EXPOSE FOR SALE" insert "**, OR ADVERTISE FOR SALE**"

Amendment No. 4

On page 3, in line 16, after "SELLS," insert "**ADVERTISES FOR SALE,**"

Rationale: Though "exposes for sale" is a broad term and encompasses advertising, the state's tianeptine prohibition, Health Gen. § 21-2D-02(a), includes a provision prohibiting advertising along with exposing for sale. This amendment aligns the language.