



State of Maryland
Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems

Wes W. Moore
Governor

Clay B. Stamp
Chairman EMS Board

Theodore R. Delbridge, MD, MPH
Executive Director

March 3, 2025

The Honorable Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk
Chair, House Health and Government Operations Committee
240 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: House Bill 1131 – Public Health – Buprenorphine – Training Grant Program and Workgroup

–LETTER OF INFORMATION–

Dear Delegate Pena-Melnyk:

The Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems (MIEMSS) is pleased to offer this letter of information regarding HB 1131, which would (1) establish a Buprenorphine Training Grant Program (Program) to assist EMS Operational Programs with offsetting the cost of training paramedics to administer buprenorphine, (2) include this Program as an authorized use of funding from the Opioid Restitution Fund, and (3) require the Maryland Office of Opioid Response to convene a workgroup to study access to buprenorphine in the State.

MIEMSS appreciates that Delegate Vogel, the bill sponsor, engaged the agency proactively in policy discussions that focused on the effectiveness of buprenorphine as a treatment option by EMS, current practices in the several jurisdictions in Maryland where certain paramedics are already trained to initiate buprenorphine induction, and the estimated cost of training paramedics in the future.

Buprenorphine is an opioid partial agonist that has proven to be effective as a component of treatment for opioid use disorder, acute pain, and chronic pain. Educating additional paramedics about medication for opioid use disorder (MOUD), including buprenorphine, would create potential opportunities to expand access to it in communities where reliable linkages to follow-up care exist. MIEMSS believes that educating 10% of Maryland's 4,000 paramedics is sufficient to facilitate this specialized care and treatment. Based on MIEMSS' conversations with our EMS partners in several jurisdictions, we estimate that it would cost approximately \$500 to train each paramedic, or \$200,000.

HB 1131 includes a provision that would require the Governor to include in the annual budget bill an appropriation of at least \$50,000 from the Opioid Restitution Fund for the proposed Program. Based on projected training costs and the amount of this annual appropriation, should this bill pass, the target number of paramedics to be trained to induce buprenorphine therapy could be achieved in four years. This, of course, assumes there is interest among EMS Operational Programs in conducting and arranging the education and among paramedics in receiving it.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if MIEMSS can be of further assistance as you consider this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "T. Delbridge".

Theodore R. Delbridge, MD, MPH
Executive Director