



Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

February 5, 2025

The Honorable Vanessa E. Atterbeary
Chair, Ways and Means Committee
130 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

RE: House Bill (HB) 379 - Prince George's County Public Middle and High Schools – Drug Detection Products - Letter of Information

Dear Chair Atterbeary and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (Department) respectfully submits this Letter of Information for House Bill (HB) 379 - Prince George's County Public Middle and High Schools – Drug Detection Products. HB 379, as currently drafted, proposes requiring the provision of drug detection products to students in Prince George's County Public Schools to identify gamma-hydroxybutyric acid (GHB) or ketamine in beverages as well as fentanyl testing strips. The legislation aims to enhance student safety by addressing the risks associated with drink spiking and fentanyl.

The Department notes that Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) are already designated as an approved Overdose Response Program (ORP). This designation enables PGCPS to train individuals and dispense naloxone and fentanyl detection strips. As a result, PGCPS already has the ability to provide drug detection strips as an ORP. However, the ORP framework does not include drink spike testing strips, as its mission is focused on preventing opioid overdoses through resources such as naloxone, xylazine test strips, and fentanyl test strips. Expanding ORP services to include drink detection products would require significant adjustments and resources outside the current scope of these programs.

While legislative action is not necessary for schools to apply for or maintain ORP status and administer drug testing strips, incorporating drink detection products would introduce new operational components that may require additional policy or regulatory consideration. Further, funding for such products is not currently included within the existing ORP allocations, which are specifically designated for opioid-related prevention efforts. To support this expansion, a separate funding mechanism would need to be established to ensure that resources for existing overdose prevention initiatives are not diverted.

MDH remains committed to measures that enhance student safety and reduce substance-related harms. However, to preserve the integrity of existing overdose response initiatives, any expansion of services should be delineated and supported by dedicated resources.

If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Sarah Case-Herron, Director of Governmental Affairs at sarah.case-herron@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Laura Herrera Scott".

Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H.
Secretary