



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

February 25, 2025

The Honorable Vanessa Atterbeary
Chair, House Ways and Means Committee
Room 131 House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

Re: House Bill 852 – Educational Institutions - Opioid Overdose-Reversing Medications - Policy Requirements (Protecting Our Kids From Overdoses Act)

Dear Chair Atterbeary:

Maryland's Office of Overdose Response (MOOR) submits this letter of support with amendments for House Bill (HB) 852 – Educational Institutions – Opioid Overdose-Reversing Medications – Policy Requirements.

HB 852 requires the State Board of Education, county boards of education, and institutions of higher education in Maryland to update certain drug education programs to include information on the mitigating effects of naloxone and other opioid overdose-reversing medications. The bill authorizes certain individuals, including students, to carry naloxone on school property.

Students in Maryland must be equipped with the information and tools necessary to prevent and respond to overdoses that occur in their communities. Youth under the age of 25 account for 5% of all overdose deaths in the state, according to the most recent finalized fatal overdose data from the Maryland Department of Health's Vital Statistics Administration.¹ Our youth deserve to have all possible resources at their disposal, especially those that are evidence-based, safe, and effective. Naloxone is an effective medication for reversing an overdose and it is safe; if administered when an overdose is not occurring, there is no harm. Students in schools are closest to the issue of youth overdose and must be empowered to be part of the solution to this issue. Education about how naloxone works and how to respond to an overdose are vital components of addressing the issue of adolescent overdose mortality.

It is important to note that under the Annotated Code of Maryland Article - Health - General §13-3108(a), legal immunity is provided to individuals (including minors) who "administers an opioid overdose reversal drug approved by the federal Food and Drug Administration to an individual who is or in good faith is believed to be experiencing an opioid overdose."²

¹ https://health.maryland.gov/vsa/Documents/Overdose/2022_AnnualIntoxDeathReport.pdf

² <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgaweb/Laws/StatuteText?article=ghg§ion=13-3108&enactments=False&archived=False>



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MOOR supports the intent of this legislation and requests an amendment to state that training and education should be provided for the utilization of naloxone and that any mention of “other overdose-reversion medication” be stricken from the bill text. The introduction of new reversal drugs in the school setting would require a significant amount of education and training, especially for reversal drugs that pose a clinical risk of more prolonged or severe withdrawal symptoms.

If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Benjamin Fraifeld, Associate Director for Policy & Advocacy at MOOR, 443-346-3013.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Emily Keller". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Emily Keller, Special Secretary of Overdose Response