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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS of Educational Institutions – Opioid Overdose–Reversing Medications – Policy Requirements (Naloxone Access Act) (HB222)

Submitted by Laura Mitchell to the Maryland House Ways and Means Committee

January 16, 2026

Chair Wilkins and Respected Members of the House Ways and Means Committee:

As the mother of a person now in long term recovery from a substance use disorder who stood with the parents of over a dozen of his childhood friends as they buried their children, I urge you to issue a FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS report on HB222, Opioid Overdose–Reversing Medications – Policy Requirements (Naloxone Access Act). Many of those friends would be alive today if their friends had naloxone with them and knew how to use it during their overdose.

HB222 would educate students about the ability of naloxone to reverse an opioid overdose. More importantly, the bill would allow students to carry naloxone in schools. This is an important piece to ending overdose fatalities among young people.

While school nurses can possess and administer overdose reversal drugs, the benefit is limited to times and instances where students and the nurses are in school buildings. Many students remain at school for extracurriculars after the nursing staff and most administrators have gone for the day, leaving the students less likely to receive naloxone in time to save their life. The ability for young people to carry naloxone will enable them to respond more quickly, and at times that are much more likely when young people are using drugs, such as unsupervised hours before and after school. This will enable students to help in an emergency situation before or after the school day, including at club or athletic events, between school and home, and at home if someone in their family has a substance use disorder.

The bill would also expand the protections from liability that exist in code for an individual who responds in good faith to the overdose emergency to include a school staff member or any other individual lawfully present at the school.

Amendments

The following amendments are requested:

- Replace the stigmatizing language “drug abuse” with “substance use” (page 2, line 26)

- Retain the annual reporting requirements of 2019 and 2020, to report naloxone administrations in schools, in perpetuity.
- Add known student and staff administrations of naloxone in schools to the annual reporting requirements.

We know students in Montgomery County have saved their peers' lives because they were trained and allowed to carry and administer naloxone at school, which meant they had it at lunch, before, and after school when fellow students needed it. Those students saved lives rather than watching a peer lose their life. There is no better reason to pass HB222.

For all the reasons cited above, I urge you to issue an **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** report on **HB222**.

Respectfully Submitted,

Laura Mitchell, MBA

Co-Founder of Montgomery Goes Purple Community Coalition, Chair & Appointed Member, Montgomery County Alcohol and Other Drug Addiction Advisory Council (AODAAC); Liaison to the Montgomery County Mental Health Advisory Committee; Member, Montgomery County Overdose Fatality Review Team (OFRT); Chair of the Substance Use Prevention Committee, Montgomery County Council of PTAs (MCCPTA), Award Winning Volunteer Advocate for Mental Health and Substance Use Prevention & Treatment.