
BILL: House Bill (HB) 222- Educational Institutions – Opioid Overdose-Reversing Medications – Policy Requirements **DATE:** January 20, 2026

SUBJECT: Educational Institutions - Opioid Overdose-Reversing Medications - Policy Requirements (Naloxone Access Act) **COMMITTEE:** Ways and Means

POSITION: Support with Amendments

CONTACT: Laurel Cratsley, Interim Executive Director of Government Affairs
laurel.cratsley@maryland.gov
443-571-5461

The Maryland State Board of Education (State Board) and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) support **House Bill (HB) 222 – Educational Institutions – Opioid Overdose-Reversing Medications – Policy Requirements** with amendments.

HB 222 represents a proactive step toward addressing the opioid crisis in Maryland by expanding life-saving measures within educational settings. By authorizing the possession and use of naloxone by students, staff, and other individuals lawfully present, the bill ensures rapid response capability during opioid overdose emergencies. It also provides liability protections for those who act in good faith, reducing hesitation to intervene and potentially saving lives.

Additionally, the bill strengthens prevention efforts through education. It mandates updates to the Maryland Comprehensive Health Education Framework to include scientifically accurate, age-appropriate instruction on opioid addiction, the dangers of fentanyl, and the mitigating effects of naloxone.

This approach equips students with critical knowledge to recognize and respond to opioid-related emergencies responsibly. Together, these measures promote safer learning environments, empower communities with practical tools to combat opioid overdoses, and align Maryland with best practices recommended by public health organizations.

The [Maryland Comprehensive Health Education Framework](#), in alignment with the national health education standards and written by a diverse group of content experts, includes research-based, age-appropriate topics and indicators for students to learn about heroin and opioid addiction and prevention, including information relating to the lethal effects of fentanyl.

MSDE supports HB 222 with the following amendments:

- Naloxone is widely recognized as safe to administer, including in situations where an opioid overdose is suspected but not confirmed. For this reason, “other opioid overdose–reversing medications” should be considered for inclusion only after their safety has been similarly demonstrated.

- Statutory language should be clear that all aspects of instruction related to heroin and opioid addiction and prevention should be developmentally appropriate. For example, some topics should not be taught in third through eighth grade that are appropriate for older students. The State Board recently voted to publish for public comment the [Comprehensive Health Education Framework](#), in which the Department has proposed including specific instruction on opioid reversal methods, including naloxone, beginning in high school. This builds upon opioid awareness instruction, which the Framework requires to begin in 5th grade.
- Carrying naloxone, which may be administered in a school setting, should be limited to high school students who have received training in administering naloxone and in actions to take in an emergency.

MSDE respectfully requests consideration of these comments as **HB 222** is discussed and deliberated.

For further information, please contact Laurel Cratsley, Interim Executive Director of Government Affairs, at 443-571-5461, or laurel.cratsley@maryland.gov.