



House Bill 456

Prescription Drug Monitoring Program - Revisions

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Health and Government Operations Committee

Date: February 18, 2016

From: Natasha Mehu

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 456. Opioid-related deaths and usage continue to rise in epidemic proportions. Maryland's Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP) helps to identify and prevent prescription drug abuse and diversion that can lead to overdose or crimes. The program should be strengthened as recommended in the Heroin and Opioid Emergency Task Force final report.

HB 456 seeks to implement one of the recommendations generated by the Heroin and Opioid Emergency Task Force by requiring prescribers and dispensers to register with and use the PDMP before prescribing or dispensing controlled dangerous substances with potential for abuse. Under current law, health practitioners are encouraged but not required to query the program regarding a patient's history before prescribing a monitored medication. The changes would bring Maryland in line with 33 other states that require either mandatory registration or mandatory use of the PDMP.

The report suggested a number of changes to the current program that would accomplish the goal of mandating registration and use, set clear guidelines for use, and ease the transition for practitioners. HB 456 incorporates these suggestions by establishing who is required to register and query the system; phasing in the mandates; providing exemptions for certain patients, conditions, and technical issues; and allowing delegation to certain support staff.

As part of its 2016 legislative initiatives, MACo advocates for comprehensive legislation and budget initiatives to address the growing opioid problem confronting each county and Maryland citizens. The changes made to the PDMP will help to bolster the State's efforts to identify and deter drug abuse and diversion while supporting access to legitimate medical uses of medication with high potential for abuse. For these reasons, MACo urges a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 456.