



House Bill 1764

Public Health – Overdose Response – Program – Dispensing of Naloxone by Paramedics

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Health and Government Operations Committee

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From: Natasha Mehu

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 1764. MACo believes that the bill assists efforts to reduce opioid-related overdose deaths by authorizing paramedics to dispense life-saving medication to individuals at risk for overdosing or in a position to help someone assumed to be overdosing.

The opioid crisis continues to be a serious threat to public health and public safety across the state. Despite extensive efforts to curb abuse and distribution, opioid-related deaths continue to rise. As paramedics are often the first to arrive on the scene of a drug overdose, great strides have been made to train and equip them to carry a life-saving medication that reverses an opioid overdose, and to protect them from certain civil liability for providing that life-saving assistance.

HB 1764 provides paramedics with an additional tool to combat the crisis. It would allow paramedics to dispense naloxone kits in non-emergency environments in accordance with the Overdose Response Program (ORP) and subject to Emergency Medical Services (EMS) board oversight.

The protections offered within the bill are necessary and not unprecedented. As the state continues to grapple with the opioid crisis, immunities have been put into place to ensure that those who are dispensing naloxone – and are acting dutifully, responsibly, and in good faith – are not open to litigious or disciplinary action for dispensing medication as allowed by law.

As part of the continued effort to address opioid overdose deaths, paramedics should be authorized to dispense naloxone to individuals they believe to be at risk for overdosing or in a position to help someone assumed to be overdosing and they should be properly protected for doing so. For these reasons, MACo urges a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 1764.