



Maryland
Hospital Association

House Bill 1549- Public Health- Drug Overdose Prevention Programs - Revisions

Position: Support

Bill Summary

HB 1549 would authorize the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to deny, suspend, revoke, or refuse to renew the registration of a person who manufactures, distributes, or dispenses a controlled dangerous substance in the State under specified conditions; require a local drug overdose fatality review team to review specified information and records related to a specified individual; authorize the Overdose Response Program to allow specified individuals to administer an opioid antagonist under specified circumstances; etc.

MHA Position

Maryland, like states across the nation, is fighting a difficult battle against a growing opioid misuse crisis. Our state has seen a nearly 30 percent increase in drug deaths in the past two years, and nearly 20,000 people go to the emergency department with non-fatal overdoses each year. Providing the tools needed to fight this emergency at the community level is critical.

The Overdose Response Program (ORP), established in 2013 by state statute, authorizes local health departments, substance use treatment providers and others in Maryland's communities to conduct training programs in the identification of drug overdoses and the administration of Naloxone. In 2015, the program was expanded through a statewide standing order, which allowed pharmacists to dispense Naloxone without a prescription to anyone who had completed the training. HB 1549 removes the restriction that only allows those who completed training to receive this life-saving medication.

HB 1549 would also require local fatality review teams to track non-fatal overdoses in addition to the data already collected. Since there is a known association between non-fatal overdoses and eventual fatal overdoses, this data is invaluable. Maryland's hospitals support comprehensive efforts like the provisions outlined in HB 1549 to tackle the opioid crisis.

For these reasons, we urge you to give HB 1549 a *favorable* report.