



Maryland
Hospital Association

**Senate Bill 820: Public Health – Co-Prescribing and Dispensing Opioid Overdose Reversal
Drugs**

Position: *Support*

Bill Summary

SB 820 generally authorizes the prescribing, co-prescribing, or dispensing (without a prescription) of an “opioid overdose reversal drug” under specified circumstances, if the “prescribing licensed health care provider” or pharmacist has completed one hour of training on the use of an opioid overdose reversal drug. The appropriate licensing board may enforce the bill’s provisions against a prescribing licensed health care provider or a pharmacist.

MHA Position

Under Maryland's new Total Cost of Care agreement with the federal government, Maryland's hospitals are working to lower costs and improve population health. In addition to treating illness and injury, hospitals are reaching out beyond their four walls to keep people well and improve the health of the communities they serve. The result: hospitals are taking care of the whole person, empowering patients and families, coordinating care among different providers, and addressing social factors that influence people's health.

Senate Bill 820 would help Maryland’s hospitals achieve these goals by allowing a provider to co-prescribe or for a pharmacist to dispense opioid overdose reversal drugs without a prescription for people who are at high risk for an overdose.

At a time when an estimated one in five Marylanders struggles with mental health and substance use disorders, this legislation is needed to help expand access to life-saving medication.

Maryland’s hospitals recognize that naloxone access is a key part of the strategy to address our state’s opioid epidemic. That is why every hospital in the state either prescribes or dispenses naloxone to people who have overdosed on opioids or are at risk of an overdose.

The Maryland Hospital Association’s Behavioral Health Task Force recommended that the state increase access to harm reduction services and products, including naloxone, in its report, “*A Roadmap to an Essential, Comprehensive System of Behavioral Health Care for Maryland.*”¹

Maryland’s hospital field recognizes that it’s important to meet patients where they are and to educate them, their families, and caregivers about proper treatment and care. Because this bill would increase access to naloxone and help save the lives of vulnerable Marylanders, we respectfully request a *favorable* report.

¹ Maryland Hospital Association, “Roadmap to an Essential, Comprehensive System of Behavioral Health Care for Maryland,” <https://www.mhaonline.org/docs/default-source/publications/roadmap-to-an-essential-comprehensive-system-of-behavioral-health-care-for-maryland.pdf?sfvrsn=2>