



Maryland
Hospital Association

Senate Bill 846 – Public Health – Correctional Services – Opioid Use Disorder Examinations and Treatments

Position: *Support*

Bill Summary

SB 846 would repeal the requirement for a certain inmate to be placed on a program of methadone detoxification under certain circumstances; require state and local correctional facilities to conduct a certain assessment of each inmate within 24 hours of incarceration to determine whether opioid or medication-assisted treatment for opioid addiction is appropriate; require state and local correctional facilities to provide certain treatments to inmates suffering from opioid use disorder under certain circumstances; and more.

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, such as the behavioral health epidemic, that influence people's health.

Because Medication-assisted treatment and the use of peer recovery specialists are both associated with improved outcomes for those with opioid use disorders, Maryland's hospitals support SB 846. The Maryland Hospital Association (MHA) supports initiatives to expand the use of all appropriate methods of this type of treatment, including efforts to increase the number of Medication-assisted treatment providers to fill the demand for these services. We also support initiatives to increase access to peer recovery services.

By repealing the requirement that inmates with opioid use disorder receive methadone detoxification, SB 846 broadens the types of medication-assisted treatment that an incarcerated individual may receive. Expanding access to these types of treatment increases the potential for positive outcomes because physicians will have a better chance of prescribing the type of care that best suits the patient. We support this as part of an incarcerated individual's treatment as well as an integral part of their overall rehabilitation process.

This bill also can ensure that these patients receive the care they need in the appropriate setting. Hospitals too often serve as a safety net for behavioral health patients. In 2014, Maryland's opioid-related emergency department visits ranked among the highest in the country. In the fourth quarter of 2016, Maryland's rate of opioid-related emergency department visits was 90 percent higher than the national average. Between 2013 and 2016, these visits jumped by 82 percent. Increased access to medication-assisted treatment and peer recovery services in Maryland's correctional facilities can help reduce these visits.

For these reasons, we urge a *favorable* report on SB 846.