

HOUSE BILL 1297

J1, E4

EMERGENCY BILL

4lr1391

By: **Delegates O'Donnell, Fisher, Proctor, and Wood**

Introduced and read first time: February 7, 2014

Assigned to: Health and Government Operations

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Calvert County and St. Mary's County – Task Force to Study the Use and**
3 **Trade of Illicit Opioids in Traditionally Rural Counties**

4 FOR the purpose of establishing the Task Force to Study the Use and Trade of Illicit
5 Opioids in Traditionally Rural Counties; providing for the composition, cochairs,
6 and staffing of the Task Force; prohibiting a Task Force member from receiving
7 certain compensation, but authorizing the reimbursement of certain expenses;
8 requiring the Task Force to conduct a certain assessment and make
9 recommendations regarding certain matters; requiring the Task Force to hold
10 certain public meetings and briefings; requiring the Task Force to submit an
11 interim progress report to the Board of County Commissioners of Calvert
12 County, the Board of County Commissioners of St. Mary's County, and the
13 Calvert County Delegation and the St. Mary's County Delegation to the General
14 Assembly, in a certain manner and on or before a certain date; requiring the
15 Task Force to submit a final report of its findings and recommendations to the
16 Board of County Commissioners of Calvert County, the Board of County
17 Commissioners of St. Mary's County, and the Calvert County Delegation and
18 the St. Mary's County Delegation to the General Assembly on or before a certain
19 date; making this Act an emergency measure; providing for the termination of
20 this Act; and generally relating to the Task Force to Study the Use and Trade of
21 Illicit Opioids in Traditionally Rural Counties.

22 Preamble

23 WHEREAS, There are numerous indicators, both anecdotal and statistical, of a
24 rapid spike in the illicit delivery and use of opioids, including medically prescribed
25 pain medications and heroin across rural areas of the State; and

26 WHEREAS, Prescription opioid pain medications such as Oxycontin and
27 Vicodin can have effects similar to heroin when taken in doses or in ways other than
28 prescribed, and they are currently among the most commonly abused drugs in the

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 United States, with research now suggesting that abuse of these drugs may open the
2 door to heroin abuse; and

3 WHEREAS, Rural areas of the State have not historically experienced the
4 troubling and widespread occurrence rate of opioid misuse that has been a
5 longstanding and well documented problem in our nation's urban centers; and

6 WHEREAS, The failure to adequately quantify the extent of this developing
7 problem and suggest related comprehensive interdiction, mitigation, and treatment
8 solutions tailored to be effective in these rural communities will continue to present a
9 clear and present danger to public health and safety; and

10 WHEREAS, The lack of well developed and comprehensive strategies to
11 diminish this opioid abuse in rural areas will continue to challenge the work
12 productivity and commerce in these communities and could have adverse
13 consequences for a broad range of quality-of-life issues; and

14 WHEREAS, Public resources are limited for addiction treatment, emergency
15 medical services, long-term health care, direct and indirect law enforcement issues,
16 court-related adjudication, and community education and recognition of abuse; and

17 WHEREAS, The unique nature of developing new solutions for this emergent
18 problem in nontraditional areas of abuse, such as rural counties, could serve as a trial
19 demonstration for developing strategies for use in other rural areas of the State; and

20 WHEREAS, Calvert County and St. Mary's County have the same form of local
21 government and share many institutions of commerce, government, and education,
22 including a broadly shared legislative district, which is conducive for a bicounty task
23 force to maximize economy and efficiency in the development of solutions applicable
24 across local rural counties; and

25 WHEREAS, It may be possible for State and county government agencies and
26 other interested parties with specific expertise in these local jurisdictions to find
27 creative ways to help solve this emergent problem; now, therefore,

28 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
29 MARYLAND, That:

30 (a) There is a Task Force to Study the Use and Trade of Illicit Opioids in
31 Calvert County and St. Mary's County.

32 (b) The Task Force consists of the following members:

33 (1) one member of the Senate of Maryland who represents both
34 Calvert County and St. Mary's County, appointed by the President of the Senate;

1 (2) one member of the House of Delegates who represents both Calvert
2 County and St. Mary's County, appointed by the Speaker of the House;

3 (3) the Public Health Officer of Calvert County;

4 (4) the Public Health Officer of St. Mary's County;

5 (5) the Sheriff of Calvert County;

6 (6) the Sheriff of St. Mary's County;

7 (7) a Circuit Court Judge from Calvert County or St. Mary's County,
8 appointed by the Administrative Judge of the 7th Judicial Circuit;

9 (8) one member of the Board of County Commissioners of Calvert
10 County, appointed by the Board;

11 (9) one member of the Board of County Commissioners of St. Mary's
12 County, appointed by the Board;

13 (10) the Superintendent of the Calvert County Public School System, or
14 the Superintendent's designee;

15 (11) the Superintendent of the St. Mary's County Public School System,
16 or the Superintendent's designee;

17 (12) the Substance Abuse Coordinator of Calvert County, from the
18 Calvert County Health Department;

19 (13) the Substance Abuse Coordinator of St. Mary's County, from the
20 St. Mary's County Health Department;

21 (14) a representative of a private nonprofit substance abuse program or
22 facility in Calvert County, appointed by the Program Director of the Carol M. Porto
23 treatment facility; and

24 (15) a representative of a private nonprofit substance abuse agency in
25 St. Mary's County, appointed by the Board of Directors of Walden Sierra, Inc.

26 (c) The Public Health Officer of Calvert County and the Public Health
27 Officer of St. Mary's County shall serve as cochairs of the Task Force.

28 (d) The Calvert County Health Department and the St. Mary's County
29 Health Department shall provide staff for the Task Force, as designated by the
30 cochairs.

31 (e) A member of the Task Force:

- 1 (1) may not receive compensation as a member of the Task Force; but
- 2 (2) is entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the Standard
3 State Travel Regulations, as provided in the State budget.
- 4 (f) The Task Force shall:
- 5 (1) conduct a comprehensive assessment of the scope of the problem of
6 opioid abuse in Calvert County and St. Mary's County, including:
- 7 (i) affected population demographics;
- 8 (ii) statistical data related to overdose and death occurrences;
- 9 (iii) related police dispatch and arrest data, including incidental
10 arrests during routine traffic stops and vehicle accident calls;
- 11 (iv) EMS dispatch occurrences and trends;
- 12 (v) related hospital emergency room admissions and trends; and
- 13 (vi) any trends or abuse observations occurring in the K-12
14 education systems and higher education systems in both counties;
- 15 (2) determine what State and local government resources are
16 available for treatment services and their adequacy;
- 17 (3) evaluate strategies to reduce recidivism rates in the criminal
18 justice system, including the use or expansion of existing adult and juvenile drug
19 courts; and
- 20 (4) make recommendations regarding:
- 21 (i) State and local resources that are needed to adequately
22 address and mitigate the problems and trends identified in the assessment of the
23 scope of the problem conducted under item (1) of this subsection;
- 24 (ii) existing and future drug interdiction efforts and efforts to
25 reduce related thefts, robberies, violence, and forgeries that are occurring as a
26 manifestation of the opioid abuse, including any recommendations for changes to State
27 laws, local laws, or official policies, which will enhance public health and safety and
28 law enforcement interdiction and prosecution efforts to stem the trade and use of the
29 opioids;

1 (iii) interagency development and sharing of real-time statistical
2 data to monitor potential trends, which may inform resource allocation and
3 deployment to reduce the abuse rate of the opioids;

4 (iv) early intervention strategies, efforts in the public school
5 system, and awareness education strategies for the general public, building on and
6 enhancing existing efforts and considering the use of both governmental and
7 community resources and groups, including information offices of State and local
8 government to coordinate public information messages;

9 (v) the impact of the problem on local commerce, businesses,
10 and employment; and

11 (vi) follow-up monitoring of the effectiveness of the initiatives
12 taken as a result of the Task Force recommendations.

13 (g) (1) The Task Force shall hold public meetings and briefings in the
14 affected counties as it considers necessary to fully complete its work.

15 (2) The Task Force may request subject matter experts, interested
16 parties, and residents of the affected counties to testify as necessary.

17 (h) (1) On or before September 30, 2014, the Task Force shall submit an
18 interim progress report to the Board of County Commissioners of Calvert County, the
19 Board of County Commissioners of St. Mary's County, and, in accordance with §
20 2-1246 of the State Government Article, to the Calvert County Delegation and the St.
21 Mary's County Delegation to the General Assembly.

22 (2) The interim report of the Task Force shall be in writing or
23 presented at a publicly advertised and open meeting of the Task Force, at the
24 discretion of the cochairs of the Task Force.

25 (i) On or before December 1, 2014, the Task Force shall submit a final report
26 of its findings and recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners of Calvert
27 County, the Board of County Commissioners of St. Mary's County, and, in accordance
28 with § 2-1246 of the State Government Article, to the Calvert County Delegation and
29 the St. Mary's County Delegation to the General Assembly.

30 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act is an emergency
31 measure, is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public health or safety,
32 has been passed by a yea and nay vote supported by three-fifths of all the members
33 elected to each of the two Houses of the General Assembly, and shall take effect from
34 the date it is enacted. It shall remain effective through June 30, 2015, and, at the end
35 of June 30, 2015, with no further action required by the General Assembly, this Act
36 shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.