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February 11, 2020

Delegate Shane E. Pendergrass, Chair
Health and Government Operations Committee
Room 241
House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Support of HB 1516; Washington County – Opioid-Associated Disease Prevention and Outreach Program – Prohibition on Establishment

Dear Delegate Pendergrass:

The Board of County Commissioners of Washington County, Maryland, by a vote of 4-0, supports House Bill 1516. It would exempt Washington County from the Opioid-Associated Disease Prevention and Outreach Program.

Washington County has worked hard to fight the opioid epidemic and has coordinated with many partners within our County to assist citizens in freeing themselves from the scourge of addiction. We understand the noble intent of Health Gen. Art. §§ 24-901 et seq. to provide Opioid-Associated outreach programs statewide. However, we have concerns that such programs have included distribution of needle syringes and other drug paraphernalia as major components of their approach. We believe that such needle distributions send the wrong message to addicted persons and have been ineffective in reducing blood-borne transmission of infections. Methods of drug cessation and treatment have been lacking in the distribution of paraphernalia packets. We therefore believe that it would be best to exclude Washington County from such an approach.

For the foregoing reasons, the Board of County Commissioners of Washington County respectfully urges the Committee to enact HB 1516.

Sincerely,

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF
WASHINGTON COUNTY, MARYLAND

BY: 
Jeffrey A. Cline, President