



## Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

March 5, 2020

### Support of Senate Bill 849

The Maryland Association for the Treatment of Opioid Dependence (MATOD) urges a favorable opinion on SB 849.

#### Board of Directors 2019 - 2021

##### President

Vickie Walters, LCSW-C  
IBR/REACH Health Services  
VWalters@IBRinc.org

##### President Elect

Josh Grollmes, MS  
Serenity Health  
JGrollmes@serenityllc.net

##### Secretary

Melissa Vail, LCPC  
Sinai Hospital Addictions Recovery  
Program (SHARP)  
MAVail@lifebridgehealth.org

##### Treasurer

Babak Imanoel, D.O.  
Northern Parkway Treatment  
Services, BH Health Services  
BabakImanoel@gmail.com

##### National AATOD Liaison

Kenneth Stoller, MD  
Johns Hopkins Hospital  
The Broadway Center  
KStolle@jhmi.edu

##### Immediate Past President

Howard Ashkin, MMH, PsA  
MedMark Treatment Centers  
HAshkin@MedMark.com



c/o IBR/REACH Health Services

2104 Maryland Avenue  
Baltimore, MD 21218



(410) 752-6080



[www.matod.org](http://www.matod.org)

Drug overdoses are a serious public health challenge in Maryland and across the country. In Maryland, the total number of overdose deaths has risen steadily since 2010, mainly due to the increase in opioid-related deaths. In 2014, Maryland enacted a “Good Samaritan” law to encourage people to call for help when someone is facing a medical emergency due to drugs or alcohol. This is a life-saving measure, but people will not call 911 if they believe they will be arrested because of their involvement.

Senate Bill 849 will build on our existing law to do three things:

- Clarify that the victim of the overdose or medical emergency is provided the same immunity from arrest, charge and prosecution as the person calling for help;
- Expand the offenses that people are immune from to include all misdemeanor offenses and possession with intent to distribute (not volume or king pin dealing); and
- Prohibit a person from being detained or prosecuted in connection with an outstanding warrant of another nonviolent crime if the only reason the police are involved is because of someone calling to save someone’s life.

Maryland’s law currently provides protection from arrest and prosecution for certain specific crimes and expands the charges from which people assisting in an emergency overdose situation are immune. If someone calls 911 in an effort to help during an overdose crisis, or they are experiencing an overdose, their parole and probation status will not be affected, and they will now not be arrested, charged, or prosecuted for:

- Possession of a controlled dangerous substance
- Possession or use of drug paraphernalia
- Providing alcohol to minors

This law covers any kind of overdose, whether it is related to opioids or alcohol or other drugs. We urge a favorable opinion on SB 849.

*MATOD members include community and hospital based Opioid Treatment Programs, local Health Departments, local Addiction and Behavioral Health Authorities and Maryland organizations that support evidence-based Medication Assisted Treatment. MATOD members include thousands of highly trained and dedicated addiction counselors, clinical social workers, physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, nurses, peer recovery specialists and dedicated staff who work every day to save and transform lives.*