

January 27, 2021

The Honorable Luke Clippinger
Chairman, House Judiciary Committee
Room 101, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

House Bill 212 (Criminal Procedure - Medical Emergency - Immunity) - FAVORABLE

Dear Chair Clippinger and House Judiciary Committee members,

I am the Chief Operations Officer at a Community Based Organization in Maryland that operates in two separate counties and offers a peer-based backpack model harm reduction outreach in neighborhoods. Our organization has extensive experience working with our participants and law enforcement at the scene of overdoses. The good samaritan law has not been effective in protection of individuals like it was envisioned to.

The good samaritan law is set in place to encourage individuals at the scene of an overdose to call emergency medical services without fear of prosecution. We have had several instances in our counties that at the scene of an overdose the law enforcement officers confiscate the individuals cell phones as evidence and for further investigation. In one instance the police used the phone to track down who sold the individual the substance and charged the dealer. When law enforcement confiscates individuals phones that is their only life line to resources, help and services and it puts a huge strain on their lives. In result to these instances we hear in the community that people are reluctant to call EMS and as a result we see a rise in fatalities. If the Good Samaritan Law is here to protect individuals, we need to expand its wording and protections to provide complete protection. In 2020 we had 741 reported overdoses to our organization that they did not call EMS and utilized Narcan they had on hand because of the fear of reprimand. With individuals being afraid to call law enforcement it is hard for us to track the data in our counties correctly and we are not able to get a real gauge on the epidemic at hand.

For these reasons, we ask that the Judiciary Committee give HB212 a favorable report.

Respectfully,

Erin Woodie, CPRS, RPS, CHW
Chief Operations Officer
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