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Ways and Means Committee

Subcommittees

Education

Revenues



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB736: “NARCAN Price Cap Act”

House Health and Government Operations Committee

Thursday, February 15, 2024 1:00PM

Madam Chair Pena-Melnyk, Madam Vice Chair Cullison, and Members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee:

In 2022, there were 2,051 fentanyl-involved deaths in Maryland. Naloxone, commercially known as NARCAN, saves lives by reversing 93% of overdoses. Nearly 27,000 lives have reportedly been saved through the use of naloxone. States that make it easier to carry and use over-the-counter overdose reversal medications see a significant drop in overdose deaths.

[Over-the-counter Narcan sells between \\$40 and \\$50.](#) Unfortunately, this price level is cost-prohibitive for many in communities who need it most. This disincentivizes individuals, who are otherwise willing and able to carry NARCAN, from acquiring it. This decreases the odds that a good samaritan in possession of an opioid overdose reversal drug is nearby in the event of an emergency, and undermines the purpose of making overdose reversal drugs available over-the-counter.

HB736 would require insurance coverage for non-prescription NARCAN, or other FDA approved opioid overdose reversal drugs, and cap the copay cost at \$10.

Under this bill, purchasing an opioid overdose reversal drug simply out of precaution for one’s community is an affordable proposition. By expanding access to these products, individuals are empowered to contribute towards protecting their friends, families, and communities from overdose-related deaths.

Given that Medicaid currently covers opioid overdose reversal drugs through a standing order, I have introduced an amendment to HB736 to remove the requirement for Medicaid coverage under this bill, focusing the legislation on private insurance coverage of nonprescription Narcan. Additionally, to address concerns regarding billing to insurance, an amendment has been introduced to clarify that the co-pay cap only applies to Narcan that is purchased from a pharmacy.

As the fentanyl overdose epidemic continues to cause profound harm to families and communities across Maryland, it is imperative to remove barriers to these life-savings products, and promote availability of opioid overdose reversal drugs.

I urge the committee to give a favorable report on HB736.