



February 13, 2024

The Honorable Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk
Chair, Health and Government Operations
Room 241, House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

The Honorable Bonnie Cullison
Vice Chair, Economic Matters Committee
Room 241, House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Pena-Melnyk and Vice Chair Cullison,

I would like to express my full support for *House Bill 736 - Health Insurance and Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Coverage - Opioid Reversal Drugs and Products*.

The opioid epidemic is one of the most challenging obstacles that our nation faces. In 2022, Maryland saw 2,051 fentanyl-related deaths¹. Naloxone (NARCAN) is a medication that can rapidly reverse an opioid addiction. This critical medication is easy to administer, has no effect if someone is not experiencing an overdose, and saves lives.

However, this life saving drug can cost between \$40-\$50². While this might not seem like much of a burden to bear to save a life, it is still cost prohibitive for many who are impacted by opioid use disorder.

The current cost prevents otherwise willing people from acquiring this life-saving drug. A [report](#) from the Kaiser Family Foundation, a non profit focused on health policy, found that 6 in 10 uninsured adults with opioid use disorder have low incomes. More than a third of these adults had incomes 100% to 200% below the federal poverty line.

HB736 would require insurance coverage's copay for non-prescription Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved NARCAN to be capped at \$10. This bill will help make the proposition of purchasing NARCAN an affordable proposition.

¹ Brown, Danielle J. "State, County Officials Discuss Strategies to Battle the Ever-Changing Opioid Crisis in Maryland." *Maryland Matters*, 17 Aug. 2023, www.marylandmatters.org/2023/08/17/state-county-officials-discuss-strategies-to-battle-the-ever-changing-opioid-crisis-in-maryland/.

² Lovelace Jr., Berkeley "Over-the-counter Narcan to cost less than \$50 for a two-pack, company says." *NBC News*, 20 April 2023. <https://www.nbcnews.com/health/health-news/over-counter-narcan-cost-opioid-overdose-drug-rcna80665>

It is my hope that by making this life-saving drug more affordable for everyone, we can continue to empower folks to protect their friends, families, and communities from overdose-related fatalities.

For these reasons, I strongly urge this committee to give *House Bill 736- Health Insurance and Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Coverage - Opioid Reversal Drugs and Products* a favorable report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David Trone". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "D" and a long, sweeping tail.

David Trone
Member of Congress