



HB 922 Maryland Department of Health – “Pill Mill” Tip Line

<http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/webmga/frmMain.aspx?id=HB0922&stab=01&pid=billpage&tab=subject3&ys=2018RS>

Health & Government Operations Committee

February 27, 2018

Support with Amendment

Testimony on behalf of the Maryland-DC Society of Addiction Medicine, a professional society of physicians and associated health professionals in the field of addiction medicine; a chapter of the American Society of Addiction Medicine.

Our society strongly supports this bill as a means of addressing what is likely to be the underlying cause of the opioid addiction epidemic: overprescribing of opioid pain medicine.

We are offering an amendment that would strike the language:

‘THE DEPARTMENT SHALL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ENSURING THAT REPORTS TO THE TIP LINE ARE INVESTIGATED BY THE APPROPRIATE LICENSING 12 BOARD’

And instead have the Department be responsible for *REPORTING* these to the appropriate licensing board.

The licensing board should be the entity responsible for determining which cases are appropriate for an investigation. A full investigation is a time-consuming activity, and a statutory mandate requiring that all such reports be *investigated* by the board may divert resources and hinder prioritizing cases.

It has been widely reported that the four fold rise in the number of opioids prescribed over the last fifteen years has contributed significantly to the opioid addiction epidemic. The graph of the four fold rise in the number of overdose deaths over this period can be superimposed over the graph of the rise in the number of opioids prescribed. Most heroin users became addicted on prescription opiate pain pills.

The need for more funding for effective and established treatments for opioid use disorder is greater than ever, and to asinificant extent, treatment is prevention.

But this approach of addressing the over-prescribing of opioid pain medicine is a way of addressing the opioid addiction epidemic at it’s source.

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