

MINUTES: MEDCHI OPIOID, PAIN & ADDICTIONS COMMITTEE (virtual)

In attendance (virtual meeting):

Alyssa Mills, MedChi Staff	Dr. Drew Fuller	Dr. Nishant Shah
Dr. Joe Adams, Chair	Dr. Sarah Merritt	Dr. Gary Sprouse
Ann Ciekot (guest speaker)	Dr. Lorraine Milio	Dr. Chris Welch
Dr. Bethany DiPaula	Dr. Dan Morhaim	Ana Lazarides: PDMP Director
Dr. Terry Fitzgerald	Dr. Keya Sau	Brian Ricci: PDMP Coordinator
Adrian Catwell: Policy Analyst, PDMP		

Brief introductions

Minutes of 8-17-2024 approved

DRUG-INDUCED HOMICIDE BILL:

GUEST SPEAKER **ANN CIEKOT**, President, MD Governmental Relations Assoc'n & Partner, Public Policy Partners, spoke on the DRUG INDUCED HOMICIDE (DIH) bill being re-introduced in Maryland.

Excerpt:

[SB 604](#) was introduced, the same as last year's version; Cross-file bill is expected soon. Unfortunately, at least half of people sentenced under DIH laws elsewhere are friends and family of the decedent who also suffer from addiction, not "dealers." It would be impossible to incarcerate enough people to make any dent in drug availability. Drug use is driven by demand, not supply.

Most people with opioid addiction share and exchange drugs to help others, and themselves, avoid devastating withdrawal. Using illicit opioids is inherently dangerous. There is evidence that DIH laws reduce the likelihood of people calling for help in an overdose situation. Moving to reinstate the failed war on drugs, is going in the opposite direction

Advocates of long sentences often point to isolated examples of individuals who "got clean" while incarcerated. But the available data suggests that such laws would increase, not decrease, overdose.

Attached is a sign-on letter urging the defeat of this bill; signed to-date by about 40 Maryland organizations. Your business, clinic, or organization can sign onto the letter [HERE](#). This should be done soon, though there is no strict deadline; the letter with updated supporting organizations will be distributed to legislators more than once, and at the bill hearing.

Note that MD's Good Samaritan law provides partial immunity from arrest when law enforcement learns of a violation only during a call for medical assistance, so as not to deter calling for help. Does not provide immunity for an extremely common charge of 'possession with intent to distribute.'

There was no objection to the proposal that this committee support opposition to the DIH bill, and communicate this to the MedChi Legislative Council.

LIMITED AVAILABILITY OF SCHEDULE II DRUGS, AND BUPRENORPHINE, AT PHARMACIES

Was raised as an issue. Dr. DiPaula will be presenting on this through the MACS website (Maryland Addiction Consultation Service), and will soon be available on that site. For this and other MACS webinars, go to: <https://www.marylandmacs.org> > Provider Support > Education > [Webinars](#) (where there are links to Upcoming Trainings and '[Past Webinars](#)').

**SLIDE DECK MIS-INFORMATION ON PRESCRIBED OPIOIDS
- FOR THE MEDCHI WEBSITE**

A slide deck critical of the FDA'S Opioid REMS Program courses was discussed and distributed with the meeting announcement. Dr. Adams asserted that the content of these courses appears to be influenced by opioid manufacturers, and that they appear to exaggerate the role of initiating long-term opioids for chronic non-cancer pain (CNCP), suggesting that initiating long-term opioids should be regularly considered for CNCP "when benefits are likely to outweigh the risks." Many of these courses have also suggested that there is no longer a relationship between prescribed opioids and subsequent mortality from illicit opioids. As an alternative to such trainings, MedChi has recorded Donald Teater MD's presentation to make it available on the MedChi website for CME without a paywall. (Dr. Teater's presentation is [also online at the ASAM website](#), but behind a paywall). Dr. Adams noted that, if there were no objections, this committee's section of the MedChi website would include this slide deck, and information on buprenorphine for pain.

THE MD PRESCRIPTION DRUG MONITORING PROGRAM (PDMP):

ACADEMIC DETAILING of outlier prescribers of controlled substances, performed by local Health Dept employees, was reviewed by Ms. Lazarides, Mr. Ricci and Mr. Catwell. PDMP's website also includes educational material on opioid prescribing.

NEXT MEETING: Tue, March 8th, 2025 6:30pm Eastern time; virtual (Odd-numbered months on the 3rd Tuesday).

Minutes by Dr. Adams.