MLA Advocacy - April 25, 2019

House Passes Library Protection for Narcan Use

Today the Senate Health Policy and Human Services Committee heard testimony from MLA President Kristin Shelley and MLA Executive Director Gail Madziar on HB 4367 and SB 200. Earlier this month on a 106 to 0 vote the Michigan House of Representatives passed HB 4366 and 4367 which would provide liability protection for libraries when providing the life-saving opioid antidote naloxone, common brand name Narcan, to an overdosing patron. Those original bills were amended by senators to expand the reach to limit liability for additional municipalities and entities along with libraries. We expect the bills to pass out of committee to the Senate floor next week.

Kristin Shelley, MLA Legislative Committee Chair and MLA President-elect gave an excellent overview of why the bills are needed. She also provided a heart-wrenching story of a death that occurred at a library where she worked years ago. The committee heard first hand how a life might have been saved if naloxone had been available then.

Library of Michigan, the Michigan Department of Education and MLA have been working together to see this protection added for our libraries. In the United States, it is reported that a person dies of an opioid overdose every thirteen minutes. While they happen everywhere, it's been impossible to miss the stories of overdoses happening in the restrooms and parking lots of public libraries especially in New York, Philadelphia and Denver. There, librarians have administered life-saving Narcan on a weekly and sometimes daily basis.

Unfortunately, libraries across the country have become a common site for opioid and heroin overdoses. Libraries throughout Michigan have been the sites of overdoses in recent years. Luckily in those cases, law enforcement officers responded quickly enough to administer Narcan before it was too late. Those libraries now train staff and stock the Narcan kits as do many libraries across the state.

Libraries, however, do not have immunity for any liability situations that could arise from

providing this life-saving treatment. As a result, library attorneys are often recommending that libraries not stock the treatment. These bills would allow libraries and library employees or agents to purchase, possess, distribute or administer in good faith an opioid antagonist without possible subject to criminal prosecution. The law would provide immunity to libraries similar to that provided to public schools.

MLA Supports Coalition for Michigan School Libraries and HB 4392 4393 and 4394

State Reps. and former teachers Darrin Camilleri (D-Brownstown Township) and Matt Koleszar (D-Plymouth), along with Rep. Kristy Pagan(D-Canton) introduced a package of bills aimed at addressing the state's ongoing literacy crisis by requiring staffed libraries in every public school in the state. The three-bill package would ensure every student access not only to a school library, but to a certified librarian or media specialist trained to improve literacy, foster a love of learning, and help identify and correct problems before they become significant obstacles to reading.

MLA supports HB 4392 4393 and 4394 and the coalition for Michigan school libraries. Please send a letter to your Michigan Representative. EveryLibrary has made it easy to do so at this link: https://www.saveschoollibrarians.org/3billsmichigan

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