

WHEREAS, Medication assisted treatment programs, including methadone maintenance programs, are an effective means of reducing opioid use and assisting addicts to become more productive citizens; and

WHEREAS, There are only 30 medication assisted treatment programs currently operating in Maryland with approximately 9,000 slots funded by the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Administration; and

WHEREAS, In October of 2002, the federal Food and Drug Administration approved two new prescription drugs, buprenorphine hydrochloride and buprenorphine hydrochloride-naloxone hydrochloride, for the office-based treatment of opiate dependence; and

WHEREAS, The federal Drug Addiction Treatment Act of 2000 authorizes qualifying physicians to practice office-based, medication-assisted opioid addiction therapy under a waiver from the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA); and

WHEREAS, One of the criteria by which physicians may qualify for waivers to practice office-based, medication-assisted opioid addiction therapy is State medical licensing board-approved experience or training in the treatment and management of opiate-dependent patients; and

WHEREAS, Office-based treatment for opioid addiction will provide additional, less stigmatized treatment options, promote higher turnover in the limited number of medication-assisted treatment program slots, and enhance the cost-effectiveness of medication-assisted treatment; and

WHEREAS, To date, only 22 Maryland physicians have obtained waivers to provide office-based, medication-assisted opioid addiction therapy; and

WHEREAS, The State of Maryland should encourage physicians, particularly primary care and family practice physicians, to pursue office-based, medication-assisted opioid addiction therapy in order to expand access to substance abuse treatment and make a positive public health impact; now, therefore,

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That:

(a) On or before November 1, 2003, the State Board of Physician Quality Assurance shall establish or designate a ~~process~~ program to train ~~and certify~~ Maryland physicians who wish to apply for a waiver from SAMHSA to practice office-based, medication-assisted opioid addiction therapy.

(b) In ~~developing the~~ establishing or designating a training and certification ~~process~~ program required under subsection (a) of this section, the Board shall:

(1) consult the Model Policy Guidelines for Opioid Addiction Treatment in the Medical Office adopted by the Federation of State Medical Boards of the United States, Inc.; and