



CITY OF BALTIMORE
MAYOR BRANDON M. SCOTT

TO	The Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council
FROM	Chief James Wallace, Baltimore City Fire Chief, Baltimore City Fire Department
CC	Mayor's Office of Government Relations
DATE	November 3, 2025
SUBJECT	25-0014 Emergency Medical Services – Administration of Buprenorphine

Position: No Position

BILL SYNOPSIS

25-0014 Emergency Medical Services- Administration of Buprenorphine was introduced on 1/27/25. This bill allows trained Emergency Medical Services (EMS) personnel to administer the drug Buprenorphine to individuals experiencing opioid-related medical emergencies.

SUMMARY OF POSITION

The Baltimore City Fire Department (BCFD) supports the intent of this bill but takes no position as the current BCFD Buprenorphine protocols will not change in response to this bill passing. Buprenorphine is a safe and effective method to assist in the management of Opioid Use Disorder. BCFD agrees that the city must use all resources available to address the overdoses that we respond to daily.

However, it must be noted that BCFD is required by state statute to follow The Maryland Medical Protocols for Emergency Medical Services, by the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems (MIEMSS). The current protocol only allows paramedics, not all EMS professionals, to administer Buprenorphine and only in certain circumstances. These circumstances are outlined below:

- a) A patient must have experienced an opioid overdose which required the administration of naloxone (either prior to arrival of EMS clinicians, or as a treatment provided by responding EMS clinicians) and have a Clinical Opiate Withdrawal Scale (COWS) score that is equal to or greater than 8, or;
- b) Is experiencing symptoms associated with opioid withdrawal, and has a COWS score

that is equal to or greater than 5 and reports no opioid use within the past 48 hours.¹

Currently BCFDs public health paramedics and chase car paramedics are trained to administer Buprenorphine. BCFD is utilizing a phased approach to training our EMS paramedics to administer Buprenorphine in alignment with the optional supplemental protocol as approved by MIEMSS for BCFD in September of 2025.²

FISCAL IMPACT

This bill will not have significant impact financially on the Baltimore City Fire Department.

AMENDMENTS

NA

¹ *Maryland Medical Protocols for EMS, authored by MIEMSS. 15.18 pp. 398-399. Effective July 1, 2025.*

² On July 1, 2025 MIEMSS updated their guidance on the administration of Buprenorphine by EMS teams across the State. Previously, only public health teams could administer Buprenorphine, but as of July 1, 2025 no all paramedics are eligible to administer Buprenorphine for patients with opioid withdrawal symptoms given indications are met. *Maryland Medical Protocols for EMS, authored by MIEMSS. 15.18 pp. 398-399. Effective July 1, 2025*