**Save lives from Substance Use Disorder - Strengthen Danny’s Law HB2300**

**The Problem:**

* Fatal opioid overdoses have increased 77% in Virginia in quarter two of 2020 compared to the same time in 2019.
* Emergency departments routinely revive patients from an overdose then discharge them hours later, in withdrawal, with no resources, linkage to care, or follow up. Many of those individuals overdose again hours or days later.
* Hospitals that have elected to enact more robust protocols for substance-related emergencies have seen promising data – however the majority of hospitals have not elected to do this.

**The Current Solution:**

* Danny’s law, effective July 1, requires hospitals with an emergency department to establish a protocol for treatment of individuals experiencing a substance-related emergency, including appropriate assessments.
* The law, as enacted, instructs that this protocol **may** include provision of take-home overdose reversal medication and linkage to other resources but does not require it. A state-wide overdose emergency requires more assertive action.

**Proposed Solution:**

Amend Danny’s law to require that each hospital with an emergency department:

* Conduct a substance use disorder screening or assessment on any individual experiencing a substance use-related emergency
* Provide patients who have experienced an opioid-related overdose with take-home naloxone or other overdose reversal medication
* Provide written information on appropriate community-based providers of behavioral health services upon discharge.

Hospitals in the Commonwealth may contract with the Department of Health or other appropriate state agencies to assist with the provision of providing naloxone to a patient who is uninsured or who qualifies for charity care.

**Conclusion:**

Requiring the above standard operating procedures for behavioral health crises would provide cost-effective solutions, improve outcomes, save lives, and reduce recidivism. Crisis intervention and stabilization must be made more of a priority in order for Virginia to combat this public health emergency, especially now in light of the compounding effects of COVID-19 on already vulnerable populations. In order to stop this epidemic of overdose death, we must support these individuals at the crisis level. Virginians are landing on the streets, in jails, in institutions, and in morgues. We can no longer afford to “treat and street” these individuals.