



# Maryland Campaign to Keep Antibiotics Working

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## Maryland Senate Committee Passes Bill to Keep Antibiotics Effective

*Maryland would become second state to address antibiotics overuse in farm animals*

**(Annapolis, Md)** The Maryland Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee passed an amended version of the Keep Antibiotics Effective Act (SB422) with a 7 - 4 vote on Tuesday night. The bill is now expected to reach the Senate floor on Thursday for a vote by the full chamber. Supporting the bill in Committee were Chairwoman Joan Carter Conway and Senators Paul Pinsky, Shirley Nathan-Pulliam, Cheryl Kagan, Barbara Robinson, Ron Young and Craig Zucker.

The bill has broad support among public health officials concerned about the threat of antibiotic resistance. In the United States, up to 70 percent of human use antibiotics are sold for use on animals. Advocates say the bill will protect human health by ending inappropriate and unnecessary use of antibiotics in animal agriculture. The bill:

- Bans the routine use of medically important antibiotics in food-producing animals that are not sick
- Allows the use of antibiotics to treat sick animals and control disease outbreaks
- Requires the collection of data to track the administration of antibiotics in farm animals

Maryland would become the second state in the nation to prohibit routine antibiotic use in livestock. California passed similar legislation restricting use on farm animals in 2015.

"Antibiotics are our last line of defense against life threatening infections," said Robyn Gilden, a registered nurse and associate professor at University of Maryland School of Nursing. "As a nurse, I am very concerned about the creation of antibiotic-resistant 'superbugs' and that's why we need the Keep Antibiotics Effective Act."

"We're thrilled that the Keep Antibiotics Effective Act passed with a strong vote in committee," said Maryland Emily Scarr, director of Maryland PIRG. "Now we're calling on the full Senate to stand for public health by standing up to the pharmaceutical industry and pass the bill as voted on by committee." Advocates say that recently, the powerful pharmaceutical industry has been mobilizing against the bill. Members of the Maryland Campaign to Keep Antibiotics Working are asking Senators to reject any floor amendments that would weaken the bill.

"The routine use of antibiotics on animals that are not sick creates a perfect breeding ground for developing antibiotic resistant bacteria," said Mae Wu, senior attorney at the Natural Resources Defense Council. "This is a serious public health concern - we can't allow the industry to weaken the bill and continue dangerous and inappropriate antibiotic use."

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) estimates the number of antibiotic resistant infections in the United States at approximately 2 million cases per year. Of those, 23,000 people will die as a result of the resistant infection. The annual cost in the United States of such infections exceeds \$55 billion per year. Bacteria resistant to antibiotics are increasing, which means infections from common injuries and surgeries are increasingly risky and can be life threatening. Recently, a Nevada woman died of a hip infection resistant to all existing antibiotics.

The bill is supported by a wide range of groups including many public health associations, such as: The Maryland Nurses Association, the Maryland Academy of Family Physicians, the Maryland Pharmacy Coalition, Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments, Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility, the Maryland Hospital Association, Nurse Practitioners Association of Maryland, and the University of Maryland School of Medicine - Center for Integrative Medicine.

Fact sheets with information from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the World Health Organization (WHO), the American Medical Association (AMA), the American Academy of Pediatrics and others are available on the Maryland Campaign to Keep Antibiotics Working website: <https://mdkeepabxworking.wordpress.com/press-kit/>

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### **Groups Supporting the Keep Antibiotics Effective Act**

Alliance of Nurses for a Healthy Environment  
Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility  
College of Notre Dame of Maryland, School of Pharmacy  
Fair Farms  
Future Harvest  
Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake  
Maryland Chapter of the American Society of Consultant  
Pharmacists  
Maryland Chapters for the Academy of Pediatrics  
Maryland Environmental Health Network  
Maryland Nurses Association  
Maryland PIRG  
Maryland Public Health Association  
Maryland State Conference NAACP  
Maryland Pharmaceutical Society  
Maryland Pharmacists Association  
Maryland Society of Health System Pharmacists

Maryland Votes For Animals  
Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)  
Notre Dame of Maryland University School of Pharmacy  
Student Government Association  
Nurse Practitioner Association of Maryland  
Real Food for Kids – Montgomery  
SEIU/1199  
Sierra Club Maryland  
University of Maryland, School of Medicine – Center for  
Integrative Medicine  
University of Maryland Baltimore, School of Pharmacy  
University of Maryland Baltimore School of Pharmacy  
Student Government Association  
University of Maryland Eastern Shore School of Pharmacy  
Student Government Association  
Woman's Democratic Club of Montgomery County