



BALTIMORE CITY

SUBSTANCE ABUSE DIRECTORATE

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March 10, 2020
Senate Finance Committee
Senate Bill 990 - Support

The Baltimore City Substance Abuse Director (BSCAD) is an advocacy and provider organization comprised of 30 Baltimore City substance use disorders treatment providers representing all levels of care from prevention to residential treatment. Our mission is the promotion of high-quality, best-practice and effective substance use disorders treatment for the citizens of Baltimore City. We are also involved in and support legislation that ensures our citizens get the best possible care through active consideration of legislation as it relates to the health and well-being of our consumer population.

As such, BCSAD strongly supports SB 990, which will allow jurisdictions to develop Overdose and Infectious Disease Prevention programs to reduce overdoses, and provide a pathway for people toward needed health care. We believe that through this initiative and the coordinated efforts of local jurisdictions throughout the state of Maryland that overdose fatalities can be reduced.

Fatal Opioid related overdoses rose for the eight straight year in 2018, again surpassing 2,000 deaths. Despite the State's three-pronged efforts of prevention, enforcement and treatment & recovery, Fentanyl related fatalities continue to climb.

While Maryland's current strategies and approach has effectively saved lives through increased naloxone distribution, increased syringe exchange services and increased access and availability to evidenced-based medication assisted treatment with Methadone and Buprenorphine, more is needed.

There are more than 100 such programs in jurisdictions around the world, including one in the United States. The research on the effectiveness of such programs has been done and evaluated for years and the results are unequivocal; they reduce needle sharing, HIV and hepatitis infections and overdose deaths. They also reduce the likelihood of public injections, discarded syringes, and offer access to people seeking treatment. Now is the time for Maryland to move forward and

Maryland needs to join the six (6) states considering legislative approval of such sites, and provide another tool in the great work being done to reduce overdose deaths and improve access to health care.

BCSAD urges a favorable report on SB 990 and we look forward to working with legislators and our communities to effectively incorporate this harm reduction strategy into the public behavioral health system.

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