



**House Health and Government Operations Committee
February 28, 2020**

**House Bill 464
Public Health - Overdose and Infectious Disease Prevention
Services Program**

Support

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2019 - 2021**

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The Maryland Association for the Treatment of Opioid Dependence (MATOD) supports House Bill 464 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.

Fatal Opioid related overdoses rose for the seventh straight year in 2017, 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 "all hands on deck" and "all tools available" 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.

Treatment and health care, of course, can only be effective if it's received. The Surgeon General's 2016 "Facing Addiction" report noted that "only 1 in 10 people with a substance use disorder receive any type of substance use treatment". HB 139 can provide life-saving services for those 90% of Marylanders with the disease of addiction who are not yet engaged in treatment.

The proposed Overdose and Infectious Disease Prevention Services Program is based on similar programs operating in more than sixty (60) cities in ten (10) countries. The results and evidence from these successful harm-reduction facilities is unequivocal – they reduce overdose deaths, provide an entry into treatment, reduce public use and publicly discarded syringes, are cost-effective and they do not encourage or increase additional drug use or crime.

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.

MATOD urges a favorable report on HB 464.

MATOD members include community and hospital based Opioid Treatment Programs, local Health Departments, local Addiction and Behavioral Health Authorities and Maryland organizations that support evidence-based Medication Assisted Treatment. MATOD members include thousands of highly trained and dedicated addiction counselors, clinical social workers, physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, nurses, peer recovery specialists and dedicated staff who work every day to save and transform lives.