

Good Afternoon Honorable Delegates,

**HB295 - Favorable**

I am Chesapeake Beach Mayor Pat Mahoney testifying on behalf of the residents and Town Council of Chesapeake Beach, Maryland to express our support for House Bill 295 recognizing August 31<sup>st</sup> as Overdose Awareness Day in the state in recognition of family and friends lost to drug overdoses.

In our small town of Chesapeake Beach, there have been more than 104 reported overdoses and 17 deaths attributed to Opioid Use Disorder since 2016, devastating families and impacting us all. Since January of 2017, I, the Town Council, residents of Chesapeake Beach, and community partners, through our Twin Beach Opioid Abuse Awareness Coalition chaired by Town Councilman Pardieck, have worked diligently to raise addiction awareness with our residents, connect those in need with prevention, recovery and support resources, reduce the shame surrounding this disorder, and most importantly -- help save lives. Outreach and education to connect people with recovery resources and reduce stigma work. In 2016, Chesapeake Beach had 14 non-fatal overdoses and 5 fatal overdoses; in 2023 we had 6 nonfatal overdoses and 0 fatal overdoses. Yet more needs to be done, especially to reduce the stigma surrounding addiction so the people afflicted with this disease and their family members seek and get the support they need. And HB295 is a step in the right direction.

This bill provides several important messages from our state leaders to our residents. They are: 1) drug addiction is a disease, not a character flaw; 2) those who have died from this affliction, and those who continue to struggle with addiction and their families are valued by us; and 3) overdose death is preventable.

For these reasons we support HB295 and encourage you to support it as well.

Sincerely,

Patrick J. Mahoney

Mayor, Chesapeake Beach