



Mission: To improve public health in Maryland through education and advocacy Vision: Healthy Marylanders living in Healthy Communities

---

**HB 548: Task Force on Responsible Use of Natural Psychedelic Substances**

**Hearing Date: 2/21/2024**

**Committee: Health and Government Operations**

**Position: Unfavorable**

The Maryland Public Health Association's Alcohol, Tobacco & Cannabis Network (ACTN) urges an unfavorable report on HB 548, a bill to establish a task force to make recommendations on creating a Maryland Natural Psychedelic Substance Access Program, among other things, including decriminalizing these products and expunging the records and/or releasing from prison those with convictions for non-violent criminal offenses relating to these substances.

The ATCN is supportive of the decriminalization and record expungement portion of the bill. We recommend removing this small portion of the bill and move it forward independently.

The ATCN is opposed to the establishment of a task force to study these substances, especially as the wording of the bill makes it sound like the purpose is to establish a legal consumer marketplace. These substances have promising use for certain patients under the direct care of medical practitioners and as part of a multi-level contract of care (e.g., other anti-depressant and/or anti-psychotic medications, therapy, etc.). To allow use in a general consumer marketplace has the potential to lead to unintended harms to consumers.

We refer you to the submitted testimony of the Maryland-DC Society of Addiction Medicine for a review of the literature on the potential harms and benefits and the current status of federal investigation into the use of these substances. Given the promising work being done at the federal level and through scientific research, we do not feel it is necessary to pursue this at the state level.

We urge an unfavorable report on HB 548.

*The Maryland Public Health Association (MdPHA) is a nonprofit, statewide organization of public health professionals dedicated to improving the lives of all Marylanders through education, advocacy, and collaboration. We support public policies consistent with our vision of healthy Marylanders living in healthy, equitable, communities. MdPHA is the state affiliate of the American Public Health Association, a nearly 150-year-old professional organization dedicated to improving population health and reducing health disparities that plague our state and our nation.*