



**House Judiciary Committee**

**February 15, 2024**

**House Bill 833 - Children in Need of Assistance –  
Parents in Substance Use Disorder Treatment  
Support**

NCADD-Maryland supports House Bill 833. We fully support efforts to ensure that children’s well-being is protected and believe that there is a legitimate and important role for the State to intervene when there is a threat to a child’s safety. We also believe there remains a strong bias against people with substance use disorders. Parents with substance use disorders are highly stigmatized by health care, education, legal, and social service systems. This leads to a greater chance of discrimination and health inequities<sup>1</sup>.

Studies show that stigma leads to harmful results, including disrupting infant bonding and parent-child attachment; discouraging school-aged children from reaching out for support; and contributing to ongoing mental health, educational, and attachment challenges<sup>2</sup>.

What House Bill 833 proposes to do is make a presumption that if a parent is in treatment for their substance use disorder, placement of a child with that parent is in their best interest. This bill does not interfere with the investigation of child welfare services, nor does it prevent child welfare agencies from arguing against that placement.

It is our hope that passage of policies such as what is proposed in House Bill 833 will lead to greater support of people who are in treatment, and increase the resources available to meet the need. We urge a favorable report on House Bill 833.

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<sup>1</sup> Hatzenbuehler ML, Phelan JC, Link BG. Stigma as a fundamental cause of population health inequalities. *Am J Public Health.* 2013;103(5):813–21.

<sup>2</sup> Kennedy-Hendricks A, Barry CL, Gollust SE, Ensminger ME, Chisolm MS, McGinty EE. Social stigma toward persons with prescription opioid use disorder: associations with public support for punitive and public health-oriented policies. *Psychiatric Serv.* 2017;68(5):462–9.