

SB140_HB690_INDIVIDUAL_FAV_.docx.pdf

Uploaded by: Chris Pedersen

Position: FAV



March 13, 2025

Senate Bill 140 | House Bill 690 - Overdose Awareness Day

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

House Health & Government Operations Committee

POSITION: Support

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Chris Pedersen, and as a lifelong Maryland resident, I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 140 | House Bill 690, which would require the Governor to annually proclaim August 31 as Overdose Awareness Day.

For me, and so many others across our state, this bill is deeply personal. The impact of addiction and overdose is something I have witnessed firsthand—as a person in long term recovery who is 39 years old I have witnessed countless friends and loved ones lose their battle with addiction. I’ve hugged people on a Thursday while they were crying and wishing they were clean, who weren’t here on a Monday. I’ve been a pallbearer for friends. I’ve even been asked to Facilitate an entire memorial service on behalf of another life long friend. When my step son’s 11 year old class mates are coming over to the house in our neighborhood I keep hearing the same answer to my probing family questions..... I live with my grandparents. Their parents have also lost their battle with addiction. Although we may be trending down as a state we have lost thousands of Marylander’s and it’s important we recognize this day for each and every one of them. Overdose Awareness Day is not just a symbolic gesture; it is a powerful acknowledgment of the struggles so many face, a way to break the stigma surrounding substance use disorder, and a reminder that recovery is possible.

In 2024, Maryland saw a 38% reduction in fatal overdoses, dropping from 2,511 deaths in 2023 to 1,553 deaths¹. This progress reflects the incredible work happening across our state—from expanded harm reduction programs to comprehensive treatment options. Here in Anne Arundel County, initiatives like the Overdose Response Training program equip community members with life-saving skills, including the administration of naloxone, which can reverse the effects of

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<https://governor.maryland.gov/news/press/pages/governor-moore-announces-dramatic-decrease-in-fatal-overdoses-in-maryland-in-2024.aspx>



an opioid overdose. Programs like these meet people where they are, providing critical resources that help prevent unnecessary deaths.

But we must do more. By officially recognizing Overdose Awareness Day, we have the opportunity to honor those we've lost, support those in recovery, and continue the fight against addiction with compassion and education. Those who have struggled and survived should know that their journeys matter. Families mourning loved ones should have a day to remember, to grieve, and to advocate for change.

Passing Senate Bill 140 | House Bill 690 would send a clear message that Maryland is committed to saving lives, promoting recovery, and ensuring that no one suffering from substance use disorder is forgotten. I urge you to support this bill and help us continue to build a community of healing, awareness, and action.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Christopher Pedersen

410-777-6360

Chris@evovelifecenters.com

SB140_HB690_ORG_FAV_.docx.pdf

Uploaded by: Chris Pedersen

Position: FAV



March 13, 2025

Senate Bill 140 | House Bill 690 - Overdose Awareness Day

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

House Health & Government Operations Committee

POSITION: Support

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Evolve Life Centers, we write to support Senate Bill 140 | House Bill 690, which would require the Governor to annually proclaim August 31 as Overdose Awareness Day.

Evolve Life Centers offers a variety of services that include Residential Treatment, Intensive Outpatient, Outpatient, Mental Health Services, Primary Care, Recovery Housing, Transportation, Evolve Kids Care.

This bill is not merely symbolic; it's a crucial step toward acknowledging the pervasive challenges of drug addiction and overdose that plague our communities

Our organization takes all of our clients and staff each August 31st skydiving for Overdose Awareness Day allowing individuals to pay homage to those they lost while simultaneously jumping into their own new life.. By dedicating a day to overdose awareness, we can amplify our collective efforts to combat this crisis, offering hope and support to those struggling with addiction.

In 2024, Maryland experienced a significant 38% reduction in fatal overdoses, with 1,553 deaths compared to 2,511 in 2023¹. This decline is largely attributed to the state's comprehensive approach to substance use treatment, which offers various levels of care tailored to meet individuals' specific needs. In Anne Arundel County, programs like the Department of Health's Overdose Response Training provide community members with education on recognizing and responding to overdoses, including the administration of naloxone—a life-saving medication that can quickly restore breathing during an opioid overdose. Additionally, community initiatives and

1

<https://governor.maryland.gov/news/press/pages/governor-moore-announces-dramatic-decrease-in-fatal-overdoses-in-maryland-in-2024.aspx>



funding opportunities which collaborate with local agencies to develop strategies aimed at reducing overdoses in their communities. These targeted efforts have been instrumental in addressing the opioid crisis and reducing overdose fatalities across the state.

By officially recognizing Overdose Awareness Day, providing and being able to shine a light on those who have survived a once, rough time in their lives, shows the heart of our state. Those who suffer from addiction and have overcome their addictions deserve to feel seen and reminded that they matter. Together we can, reduce stigma around substance use disorders, and remember those we've lost to overdoses.

Senate Bill 140 | House Bill 690 represents a significant stride towards confronting the overdose crisis in Maryland with compassion, education, and actionable awareness. By aligning our efforts with successful models from other states, we can foster a community that supports recovery and prevention, ultimately reducing the number of lives lost to overdose.

It is for these reasons, we urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 140 | House Bill 690, affirming Maryland's commitment to preventing drug overdoses and honoring the lives affected by this ongoing epidemic. Thank you for considering our testimony.

Sincerely,

Christopher Pedersen, C.O.O.

Evolve Life Centers

410-777-6360

chris@evovelifecenters.com

2025-03-13 - MD - Pyramid Healthcare Senate EEE Te

Uploaded by: Collan Rosier

Position: FAV



Pyramid Healthcare

AN INTEGRATED BEHAVIORAL HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

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F: 888-218-8253
pyramidhc.com

March 13, 2025

Delivered Via [MyMGA Witness Signup Platform](#)

The Hon. Brian J. Feldman, Chair
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Maryland Senate
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Hon. Cheryl C. Kagan, Vice Chair
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Maryland Senate
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Pyramid Healthcare Testimony in Favor of Senate Bill 140 – an Act Concerning Overdose Awareness Day

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

The Pyramid Healthcare, Inc. (“Pyramid Healthcare”) family of companies submits the following testimony urging the Committee to favorably report SB 140, An Act Concerning Overdose Awareness Day. Doing so will support Marylanders struggling with substance use disorder (“SUD”) challenges related to the opioid epidemic.

Pyramid Healthcare is an integrated behavioral healthcare system serving Medicaid and commercial clients in 8 states across a continuum of residential and outpatient substance use disorder (“SUD”), mental health, autism, and eating disorder treatment services. We employ over 3,600 team members across our 80+ active facilities which treat approximately 14,000 clients on any given day. In Maryland, we operate five locations serving over 2,000 residents per year: a withdrawal management & residential treatment center and an outpatient treatment center in California, a withdrawal management & residential treatment center in Charlotte Hall, and a withdrawal management & residential treatment center in Joppa. In January 2025, our new Prince George’s County facility began treating clients. That facility will ultimately offer approximately 75 withdrawal management & residential SUD treatment beds for adult residents of Prince George’s County and throughout central Maryland. In total, we have almost 275 licensed SUD residential treatment beds for adult Medicaid clients across the state.

For the first time, deaths from drug overdoses have finally declined. Still, nearly 100,000 Americans die every year from fentanyl and other opioid overdoses. These declines are due to the many years of hard work improving access to treatment, especially for those who are covered by Medicaid. Now is not the time to give up the fight which has realized such positive results.

Please consider this feedback and favorably adopt SB 140 to make August 31st Overdose Awareness Day in Maryland and to address substance use disorders and, specifically, the ongoing opioid epidemic. Thank you for your support of mental health and substance use disorder treatment providers in Maryland and for considering our policy proposals and recommendations on behalf of Pyramid Healthcare. If we can provide any additional information or materials, please contact me at crosier@pyramidhc.com or 667-270-1582. In addition, we invite you or a member of the staff to reach out and schedule a visit to one of our Maryland locations sometime soon to learn more about our programs and services.

Sincerely,

Dominic Barone, LSW, LCADC, CCS, CPRS
Vice President of Operations (Residential)

Collan B. Rosier
Vice President of Government Relations

CC: Members, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Lamorea Stanton, Committee Manager, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

SB 140 HB690_LOS 1.pdf

Uploaded by: Corrie Simkin-Brocato

Position: FAV

March 13, 2025

Senate Bill 140 | House Bill 690 - Overdose Awareness Day

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

House Health & Government Operations Committee

POSITION: Support

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jason Hendrickson, and as a lifelong Maryland resident, I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 140 | House Bill 690, which would require the Governor to annually proclaim August 31 as Overdose Awareness Day.

For me, and so many others across our state, this bill is deeply personal. The impact of addiction and overdose is something I have witnessed firsthand—During one of my first stays in a recovery house, I lost a roommate to an overdose. I miss bonding with my roommate deeply; one of my favorite memories with them was watching the TV series, *Dexter*, on the couch together; eventually we got bored with it and started making funny Snapchat videos to pass the time instead. We always had such unique experiences whenever we spent time together. I believe spreading awareness about Overdose Awareness Day on social media is a really great gesture. I've been homeless before in Baltimore, and I know a lot of harm reduction people come and hand out Narcan. I would be one of the people to take the supplies from harm reduction and pass them around to the rest of the homeless community. Overdose Awareness Day is not just a symbolic gesture; it is a powerful acknowledgment of the struggles so many face, a way to break the stigma surrounding substance use disorder, and a reminder that recovery is possible.

In 2024, Maryland saw a 38% reduction in fatal overdoses, dropping from 2,511 deaths in 2023 to 1,553 deaths. This progress reflects the incredible work happening across our state—from expanded harm reduction programs to comprehensive treatment options. Here in Anne Arundel County, initiatives like the Overdose Response Training program equip community members with life-saving skills, including the administration of naloxone, which can reverse the effects of an opioid overdose. Programs like these meet people where they are, providing critical resources that help prevent unnecessary deaths.

But we must do more. By officially recognizing Overdose Awareness Day, we have the opportunity to honor those we've lost, support those in recovery, and continue the fight against addiction with compassion and education. Those who have struggled and survived should know that their journeys matter. Families mourning loved ones should have a day to remember, to grieve, and to advocate for change.

Passing Senate Bill 140 | House Bill 690 would send a clear message that Maryland is committed to saving lives, promoting recovery, and ensuring that no one suffering from substance use disorder is forgotten. I urge you to support this bill and help us continue to build a community of healing, awareness, and action.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jason Hendrickson

Anne Arundel County Resident

SB 140 HB690_LOS 2.pdf

Uploaded by: Corrie Simkin-Brocato

Position: FAV

March 13, 2025

Senate Bill 140 | House Bill 690 - Overdose Awareness Day

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

House Health & Government Operations Committee

POSITION: Support

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Michael Barnes, and as a lifelong Maryland resident, I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 140 | House Bill 690, which would require the Governor to annually proclaim August 31 as Overdose Awareness Day.

For me, and so many others across our state, this bill is deeply personal. The impact of addiction and overdose is something I have witnessed firsthand - Losing someone to an overdose has left a vacancy in my life. The friends I've lost to overdose leave me with memories of their spirit. They were a joy to be around and always lit up the room when they walked in. I am in support of Overdose Awareness Day because the community needs to continue education on harm reduction. The harmful sides of addiction should be exposed just as much as the grandiose side; the homelessness, the diseases, the loss of income, the loss of jobs, the loss of life, the loss of self-esteem. When you're living with addiction, every aspect of your life and day becomes dedicated to your substance of choice. If people were shown the harsh realities of addiction, perhaps society would be more empathetic. Overdose Awareness Day is not just a symbolic gesture; it is a powerful acknowledgment of the struggles so many face, a way to break the stigma surrounding substance use disorder, and a reminder that recovery is possible.

In 2024, Maryland saw a 38% reduction in fatal overdoses, dropping from 2,511 deaths in 2023 to 1,553 deaths. This progress reflects the incredible work happening across our state—from expanded harm reduction programs to comprehensive treatment options. Here in Anne Arundel County, initiatives like the Overdose Response Training program equip community members with life-saving skills, including the administration of naloxone, which can reverse the effects of an opioid overdose. Programs like these meet people where they are, providing critical resources that help prevent unnecessary deaths.

But we must do more. By officially recognizing Overdose Awareness Day, we have the opportunity to honor those we've lost, support those in recovery, and continue the fight against addiction with compassion and education. Those who have struggled and survived should know that their journeys matter. Families mourning loved ones should have a day to remember, to grieve, and to advocate for change.

Passing Senate Bill 140 | House Bill 690 would send a clear message that Maryland is committed to saving lives, promoting recovery, and ensuring that no one suffering from substance use disorder is forgotten. I urge you to support this bill and help us continue to build a community of healing, awareness, and action.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Michael Barnes

Anne Arundel County Resident

SB140_HB690_ERC_FAV 3.13.25.pdf

Uploaded by: Corrie Simkin-Brocato

Position: FAV



March 13, 2025

Senate Bill 140 | House Bill 690 - Overdose Awareness Day

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

House Health & Government Operations Committee

POSITION: Support

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Elevate Recovery Centers, we write to support Senate Bill 140 | House Bill 690, which would require the Governor to annually proclaim August 31 as Overdose Awareness Day.

We are Managing Partners of Elevate Recovery Centers, an outpatient substance use treatment provider owned and operated in Anne Arundel County. We are residents of Anne Arundel County and persons in long term recovery. This bill is not merely symbolic; it's a crucial step toward acknowledging the pervasive challenges of drug addiction and overdose that plague our communities

Last year, Elevate Recovery Centers served over 900 individuals, providing them with education and resources for early recovery from substance use disorder. By dedicating a day to overdose awareness, we can amplify our collective efforts to combat this crisis, offering hope and support to those struggling with addiction.

In 2024, Maryland experienced a significant 38% reduction in fatal overdoses, with 1,553 deaths compared to 2,511 in 2023¹. This decline is largely attributed to the state's comprehensive approach to substance use treatment, which offers various levels of care tailored to meet individuals' specific needs. In Anne Arundel County, programs like the Department of Health's Overdose Response Training provide community members with education on recognizing and responding to overdoses, including the administration of naloxone—a life-saving medication that can quickly restore breathing during an opioid overdose. Additionally, community initiatives and funding opportunities which collaborate with local agencies to develop strategies aimed at reducing overdoses in their communities. These targeted efforts have been instrumental in addressing the opioid crisis and reducing overdose fatalities across the state.

¹ <https://governor.maryland.gov/news/press/pages/governor-moore-announces-dramatic-decrease-in-fatal-overdoses-in-maryland-in-2024.aspx>



By officially recognizing Overdose Awareness Day, providing and being able to shine a light on those who have survived a once, rough time in their lives, shows the heart of our state. Those who suffer from addiction and have overcome their addictions deserve to feel seen and reminded that they matter. Together we can, reduce stigma around substance use disorders, and remember those we've lost to overdoses.

Senate Bill 140 | House Bill 690 represents a significant stride towards confronting the overdose crisis in Maryland with compassion, education, and actionable awareness. By aligning our efforts with successful models from other states, we can foster a community that supports recovery and prevention, ultimately reducing the number of lives lost to overdose.

It is for these reasons, we urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 140 | House Bill 690, affirming Maryland's commitment to preventing drug overdoses and honoring the lives affected by this ongoing epidemic. Thank you for considering our testimony.

Sincerely,

Nicholas Acosta
Managing Partner
Elevate Recovery Centers

Basile Ferro
Managing Partner
Elevate Recovery Centers

SB 140_Overdose Awareness Day_BHSB_FAVORABLE.pdf

Uploaded by: Dan Rabbitt

Position: FAV



March 13, 2025

**Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT**

SB 140 – Overdose Awareness Day

Behavioral Health System Baltimore (BHSB) is a nonprofit organization that serves as the local behavioral health authority (LBHA) for Baltimore City. BHSB works to increase access to a full range of quality behavioral health (mental health and substance use) services and advocates for innovative approaches to prevention, early intervention, treatment and recovery for individuals, families, and communities. Baltimore City represents nearly 35 percent of the public behavioral health system in Maryland, serving over 100,000 people with mental illness and substance use disorders (collectively referred to as “behavioral health”) annually.

Behavioral Health System Baltimore supports SB 140 – Overdose Awareness Day. This bill directs the Governor to proclaim August 31 as Overdose Awareness Day in recognition of the thousands of Marylanders who have lost their lives due to overdose.

The number of overdose deaths in Maryland has skyrocketed in recent years. About 2,500 people in Maryland died of fatal overdose in 2023, including 1,000 who die in Baltimore City. There are promising signs that overdose declined in 2024, but fatalities are still many times higher than they were ten years ago. This loss of life remains staggering and deserves attention.

Overdose Awareness Day is an internationally recognized day of remembrance for all those impacted by addiction and overdose epidemic. Honoring this day can help raise awareness of this terrible crisis and send a strong message of hope and healing to those struggling with addiction.

The friends and family of those who have lost their lives to overdose also deserve to have their grief recognized and their lost loved ones deserve to be remembered. **BHSB urges the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee to support SB 140.**

For more information, please contact BHSB Policy Director Dan Rabbitt at 443-401-6142

SB140 - MOOR - LOS.pdf

Uploaded by: Emily Keller

Position: FAV



Maryland's Office of Overdose Response

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Emily Keller, Special Secretary of Overdose Response

March 13, 2025

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Senate Bill 0140 - Overdose Awareness Day

Dear Chair Feldman,

Maryland's Office of Overdose Response (MOOR) respectfully submits this letter of support for Senate Bill (SB) 0140, which would require the Governor to annually proclaim August 31st as Overdose Awareness Day. This initiative is a crucial step in addressing the opioid crisis that has deeply affected our communities. By establishing an official day of awareness, we can honor those lost to overdose, support those grieving a loved one lost to an opioid overdose, reduce stigma, and promote evidence-based prevention and treatment strategies. Public awareness campaigns have been effective in increasing knowledge about the risks of substance use and life-saving interventions like naloxone. Recognizing Overdose Awareness Day will foster solidarity, support those affected, and encourage individuals to seek help and access resources. Passing SB 0140 will save lives, support families, and build healthier, more resilient communities in Maryland.

The implementation of Senate Bill 0140 will reinforce an existing international campaign recognizing Overdose Awareness Day on August 31st¹. As the CDC emphasizes, this campaign sends a vital message to those struggling with substance use—that they are seen, valued, and supported, both as individuals and as members of our communities. By taking this step, we not only acknowledge the challenges faced by those affected, but also empower communities to transform past hardships into opportunities for healing and change.

If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Benjamin Fraifeld, Associate Director for Policy & Advocacy at MOOR, 443-346-3013.

Sincerely,

Emily Keller
Special Secretary of Overdose Response

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/overdose-prevention/php/toolkits/ioad.html>

CE Ball 2025 - SB 140 - Overdose Awareness Day_Fin

Uploaded by: Maureen Evans

Position: FAV



HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE OF COUNTY EXECUTIVE

3430 Courthouse Drive ■ Ellicott City, Maryland 21043 ■ 410-313-2013 Voice/Relay

Calvin Ball
Howard County Executive
cball@howardcountymd.gov

www.howardcountymd.gov
FAX 410-313-3051

March 13, 2025

Senator Brian Feldman, Chair
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT** of Senate Bill 140: Overdose Awareness Day

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee,

While Howard County saw a 85% percent decrease in nonfatal overdoses from 2018 through 2024, and a 43% decrease in fatal overdose during the same time period, drug overdoses continue to hit our Maryland communities hard. Recent data from Maryland's Overdose Data Dashboard shows that each year, thousands of Marylanders continue to fall victim to overdoses.

Senate Bill 140 would require the Governor to annually proclaim August 31st as Overdose Awareness Day, part of a global effort to end overdoses. Since I took office in 2019, Howard County opened Howard House, Hilda's Place, and Highland House, which are all treatment houses for men and women recovering from substance misuse disorders. We also opened Sheppard Pratt's new campus in Elkridge, which contains 17 medically managed detox beds for people with co-occurring mental health challenges.

I remain committed to expanding access to life-saving treatment and developing solutions to have a more robust overdose response strategy. We have invested \$1.5 million in residential treatment facilities to create a continuum of care that funds case managers, peer support specialists and a reliable transportation network. In 2023, I created the Opioid Collaborative Community Council to assist in determining how the county should use \$12.3 Million in funds received through a National Settlement Agreement with opioid manufacturers and any future settlements. Howard County also provides nearly \$600,000 annually to support behavioral health navigation. Finally, during the past year, our Health Department has trained nearly 2,000 people in its Overdose Response program, which includes naloxone administration. They also distributed over 2,100 naloxone kits last year alone.

Howard County proudly hosts its own International Overdose Awareness Day event every year, which brings together partners throughout the community to honor the individuals we have lost to overdose. Howard County's event also provides an opportunity for people to receive information on available treatment and recovery resources, naloxone and other harm reduction training, and to meet people in recovery who are residing in Howard County's halfway houses.



HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE OF COUNTY EXECUTIVE

3430 Courthouse Drive ■ Ellicott City, Maryland 21043 ■ 410-313-2013 Voice/Relay

Calvin Ball
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The public acknowledgment of this day of awareness helps to diminish the stigma of those who have lost their lives to substance misuse and the grief of the families and loved ones left behind. The tragic loss of life is preventable with proper access to care, community support and continued investments from public/private partnerships.

Publicly destigmatizing what has long been perceived as criminal behavior, a private family matter or source of shame would be a step in the direction towards healing and recovery. I welcome your partnership on this critical acknowledgement and urge a favorable report on SB 140.

All the Best,

Calvin Ball
Howard County Executive

SB 140 - MDH - EEE- LOS (1).pdf

Uploaded by: Meghan Lynch

Position: FAV



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Ryan Moran, DrPH, MHSA, Acting Secretary

March 13, 2025

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment
Miller Senate Office Building, 2 West Wing
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Senate Bill 140 - Overdose Awareness Day - Letter of Support

Dear Chair Feldman and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (Department) respectfully submits this letter of support for Senate Bill (SB) 140– Overdose Awareness Day. SB 0140 will require the Governor to annually announce August 31st each year as Overdose Awareness day.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Maryland reported approximately 2,800 drug overdose deaths in the 12 month period ending in June 2024. Nationally, provisional data indicates that approximately 94,000 overdose deaths occurred in the 12-month period ending in June 2024. This data demonstrates that the impact of overdose is far-reaching and impacts all communities across the State.

Overdose Awareness Day remembers those lost to overdoses and increases awareness of substance use disorders. This day is observed each year across the globe, leading into September, which is Recovery Month. An official proclamation of August 31st as Overdose Awareness Day would emphasize Maryland's commitment to addressing the issue of substance use and overdose in our communities and would honor the many Marylanders who have died of an overdose.

If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Sarah Case-Herron, Director of Governmental Affairs at sarah.case-herron@maryland.gov or 443-826-1851.

Sincerely,

Ryan B. Moran, DrPH, MHSA
Acting Secretary

SB140Testimony2025.pdf

Uploaded by: Michael Jackson

Position: FAV

MICHAEL A. JACKSON
Legislative District 27
Calvert, Charles and
Prince George's Counties

Budget and Taxation Committee

Subcommittees

Pensions

Procurement

Chair, Public Safety, Transportation,
and Environment



Miller Senate Office Building
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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

TESTIMONY - SENATE BILL 140

OVERDOSE AWARENESS DAY

EDUCATION, ENERGY, & THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

MARCH 13, 2025

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and Committee Members:

Senate Bill 140 is a very straightforward bill that simply requires the Governor to annually proclaim August 31st as Overdose Awareness Day.

Each year Maryland loses thousands of residents to drug overdoses and drug-related death. The purpose of this legislation is to clearly enshrine August 31st as a date to recognize those deaths and this epidemic and to encourage those currently suffering to seek support and treatment.

As someone who spent the majority of his professional career in law enforcement, I have seen firsthand the impact that drug addiction can have on individuals and to their loved ones. Reducing the stigma attached to seeking treatment for addiction would save countless lives. I am hopeful that declaring August 31st as Overdose Awareness Day would be a means to reduce said stigma and to quell the suffering of those who are addicted and those who love them.

For the reasons listed above, I ask for a favorable report of Senate Bill 140.

Maryland Catholic Conference_FAVSB140_.pdf

Uploaded by: Michelle Zelaya

Position: FAV



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

March 13th, 2025

SB140

Overdose Awareness Day
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Position: Favorable

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this testimony in support of **Senate Bill 140**. The Maryland Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

Senate Bill 140 would require the Governor to annually proclaim August 31st as Overdose Awareness Day. This legislation is an important step towards raising awareness, promoting compassion, and advocating for solutions to the opioid epidemic and other forms of substance misuse.

Substance use disorders affect individuals from all walks of life and can have profound physical, emotional, and spiritual consequences. As a community guided by the principles of love, mercy, and solidarity, we are called to respond with compassion and support for those who are struggling with addiction, as well as their families and loved ones.

Designating August 31 as Overdose Awareness Day serves as a powerful reminder of the lives lost to overdose and the ongoing need for prevention, intervention, and treatment efforts. It provides an opportunity for prayer, reflection, and remembrance for those who have died from overdose, as well as a call to action for communities to come together to address the root causes of substance abuse and support individuals on their journey towards recovery and healing.

This legislation aligns with the Catholic tradition's emphasis on solidarity and the common good. By raising awareness about the overdose crisis and encouraging collective action to address it, we affirm our shared responsibility to care for the most vulnerable among us and work towards building communities of compassion, support, and hope.

For these reasons, the Maryland Catholic Conference urges a favorable report on **Senate Bill 140**.

NCADD-MD - 2025 SB 140 FAV - Overdose Awareness Da

Uploaded by: Nancy Rosen-Cohen

Position: FAV



**Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
March 13, 2025**

**Senate Bill 140 - Overdose Awareness Day
Support**

NCADD-Maryland strongly supports Senate Bill 140 to officially recognize August 31st as Overdose Awareness Day in Maryland. Since 2001, communities worldwide have observed this day to remember those lost to overdoses and to raise awareness about the ongoing crisis. Every year, events are held in cities and towns across the globe to honor lives lost, support those affected, and advocate for policies that improve prevention, treatment, and recovery efforts.

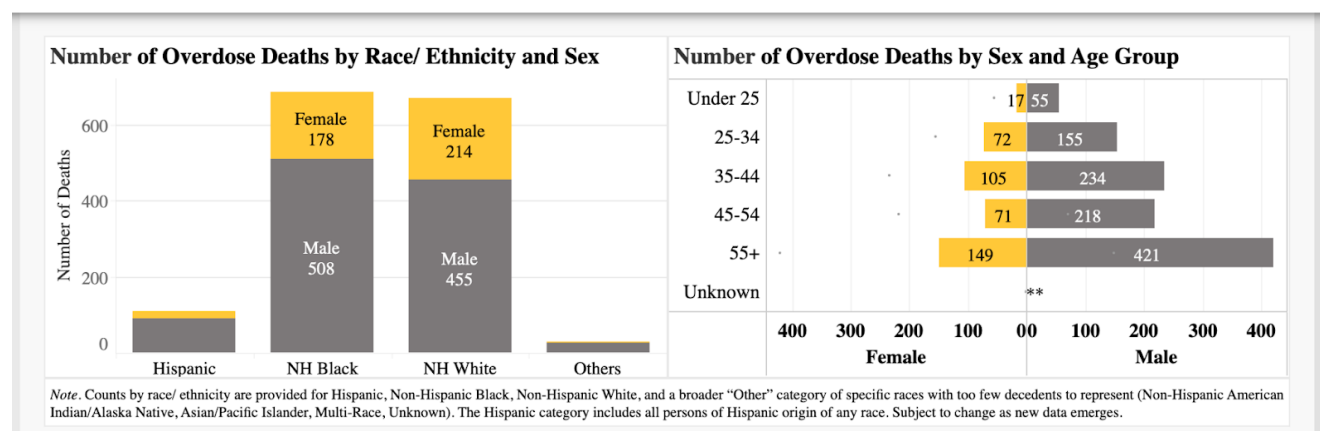
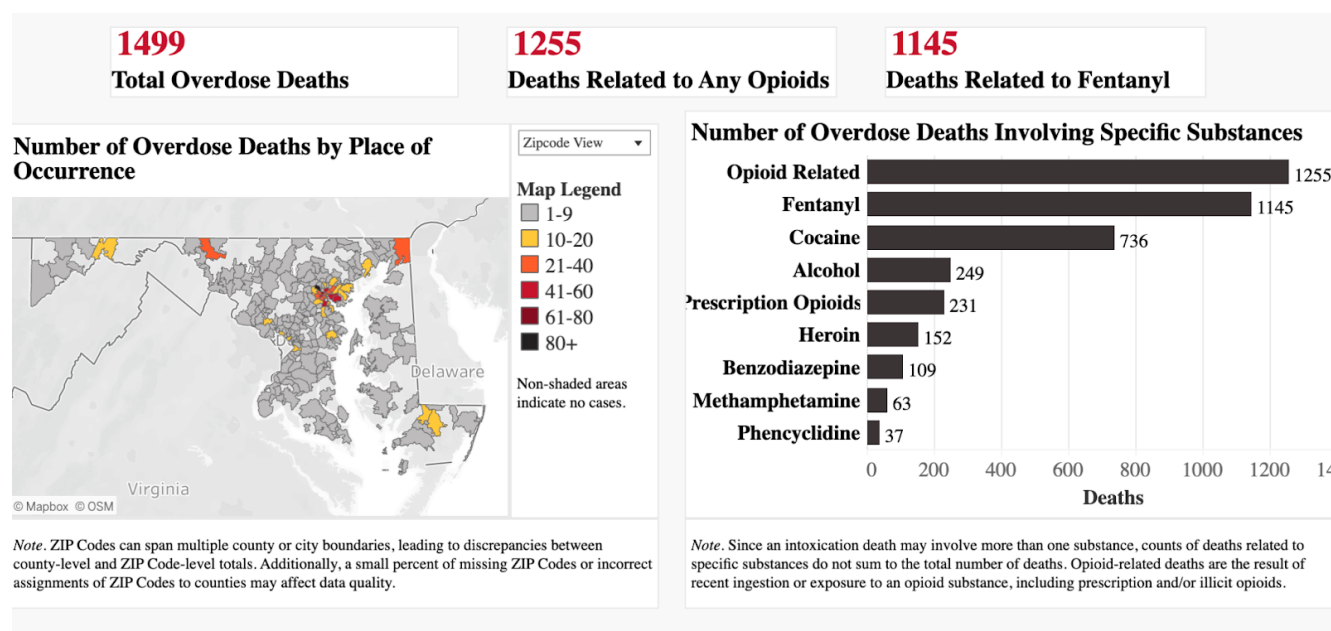
Maryland continues to face a significant public health challenge due to drug overdoses. According to the Maryland Department of Health's latest data, from February 2024 to January 2025, there were 1,499 total overdose deaths in the state, with 1,255 deaths related to opioids and 1,145 linked specifically to fentanyl. Cocaine-related overdoses accounted for 736 deaths, highlighting the prevalence of polysubstance use. These figures underscore the need for continued investment in education, prevention, and intervention efforts. Establishing Overdose Awareness Day will send a strong message that the state is committed to addressing this crisis, supporting affected families, and ensuring that resources reach those in need.

Encouragingly, recent data suggests that Maryland is making progress in reducing overdose deaths. Overdose fatalities declined by 34.8% in 2024, marking a significant improvement after years of increases. This positive trend reflects the effectiveness of public health initiatives, harm reduction programs, and policy interventions that have been implemented to combat substance use disorder. However, the crisis is far from over, and continued awareness and action are necessary to sustain this momentum. Recognizing Overdose Awareness Day at the state level will help reinforce the importance of these efforts while providing an annual opportunity to educate the public and honor the lives lost.

One of the most significant barriers to addressing substance use disorder is the stigma that prevents individuals from seeking help. Many people struggling with addiction experience feelings of shame, guilt, and isolation, making it more difficult for them to access treatment and support. Overdose Awareness Day will serve as a platform to educate communities about addiction as a medical condition, reduce stigma, and foster an environment in which individuals feel safe seeking help. It will also provide an opportunity to support families and friends who have lost loved ones to overdose, recognizing their grief and acknowledging the devastating impact of substance use disorder on communities across Maryland.

(over)

NCADD-Maryland firmly believes that greater attention to this crisis is essential. While progress is being made, the need for ongoing advocacy, education, and policy action remains critical. We urge your strong support for Senate Bill 140 to help ensure Maryland remains committed to preventing overdoses, expanding access to treatment, and supporting those affected by addiction.



SB140_RHTC_FAV_.pdf

Uploaded by: Therese Hessler

Position: FAV



March 13, 2025

Senate Bill 140 - Overdose Awareness Day

Senate Education, Energy, & Environment Committee

POSITION: Support

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Recovery Housing & Treatment Centers Coalition of Maryland (RHTC), we write to express strong support for Senate Bill 140 (SB140), which would require the Governor to annually proclaim August 31 as Overdose Awareness Day. RHTC is a coalition of recovery residences, group homes, treatment centers, and other critical services that form the backbone of Maryland's continuum of care. Our mission is to educate policymakers, stakeholders, and the general public on the importance of maintaining and expanding recovery facilities and services in our state. We work to ensure that individuals in recovery have access to high-quality, stable housing and treatment options that support their long-term well-being and reintegration into the community.

SB140 is a critical step in addressing the overdose epidemic. This bill is not merely symbolic; it represents a crucial step toward raising awareness, reducing stigma, and strengthening community engagement in combatting the opioid crisis. Maryland is not immune to the opioid crisis gripping our nation. In 2024, Maryland experienced a significant 38% reduction in fatal overdoses, with 1,553 deaths compared to 2,511 in 2023¹. This decline is largely attributed to the state's comprehensive approach to substance use treatment, which offers various levels of care tailored to meet individuals' specific needs. In Anne Arundel County, programs like the Department of Health's Overdose Response Training provide community members with education on recognizing and responding to overdoses, including the administration of naloxone—a life-saving medication that can quickly restore breathing during an opioid overdose. Additionally, community initiatives and funding opportunities which collaborate with local agencies to develop strategies aimed at reducing overdoses in their communities. These targeted efforts have been instrumental in addressing the opioid crisis and reducing overdose fatalities across the state.

RHTC supports SB140 because Overdose Awareness Day aligns with our mission to provide recovery support and advocate for those in need. By recognizing August 31 officially, Maryland will reinforce its commitment to those in recovery, ensuring access to resources, education, and support services for individuals overcoming addiction.

¹ <https://governor.maryland.gov/news/press/pages/governor-moore-announces-dramatic-decrease-in-fatal-overdoses-in-maryland-in-2024.aspx>



In conclusion, SB140 is a meaningful step toward fostering a culture of awareness, prevention, and recovery in Maryland. By following successful models from other states, we can reduce stigma, promote education, and save lives. We urge a favorable report on SB140, affirming Maryland's commitment to preventing drug overdoses and honoring those affected by this ongoing crisis.

For more information, please contact:

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