



**Senate Finance Committee**

**March 25, 2025**

**House Bill 1066**

**Commission on Behavioral Health Care Treatment and Access – Workgroups**

**Support**

NCADD-Maryland supports House Bill 1066. Creating a Workgroup on the Improvement of Health, Social, and Economic Outcomes Related to Substance Use would bring needed focus to the work of the Behavioral Health Commission. The research is clear that addressing substance use disorders (SUDs) has tremendous outcomes, including lower health care system costs, higher workplace productivity, healthier family relationships, and improved mental and physical health.

It is also shown that addressing SUDs lowers crime rates and incarceration. This has positive impacts on communities, and saves money. Recent policy discussions have included criminal justice approaches to dealing with SUD, which are more expensive and have unintended public health consequences. There are also policy discussions promoting less law enforcement involvement with people who use drugs as a way to better engage people in systems that provide support in various ways, including treatment.

The items related to substance use and the criminal justice system could lead to recommendations that better align Maryland's policies and programs with evidence-based approaches that have long-lasting positive impacts on individuals, families and communities. We therefore request a favorable report.