



March 13, 2025

House Bill 690 - Overdose Awareness Day

House, Health & Government Operations 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 House Bill 690 (HB690), 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.

HB690 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 HB690 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, HB690 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 HB690, affirming Maryland's commitment to preventing drug overdoses and honoring those affected by this ongoing crisis.

For more information, please contact:

Therese Hessler, Ashlar Government Relations | 301-503-2576 | therese@ashlargr.com