



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 Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk
Chair, Health and Government Operations Committee
241 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: House Bill 0690 - Overdose Awareness Day

Dear Chair Pena-Melnyk,

Maryland's Office of Overdose Response (MOOR) respectfully submits this letter of support for House Bill (HB) 0690, 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 HB 0690 will save lives, support families, and build healthier, more resilient communities in Maryland.

The implementation of House Bill 0690 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>