



**House Health Committee  
February 17, 2026**

**House Bill 529 - Code Revision - Health –  
Maryland Medical Assistance Program**

**Support**

NCADD-Maryland supports House Bill 529. While this bill does not make any policy change, it changes language that is stigmatizing and damaging to people with substance use disorders. It is well researched that stigmatizing language can lead to discrimination, people being reluctant to seek care, and people being treated poorly, including by health care professionals.

Substance use disorders are chronic medical conditions that are treatable. It has taken many years of education to move away from stigmatizing words like “junkie” and “drug abuse” to more accurate, clinical terms such as substance use disorder. NCADD-Maryland has led the way in proposing legislation and amendments in the Maryland General Assembly that use or replace these words that have negative connotations.

We are thrilled that this code revision undertakes this task within Medicaid, and we stand ready to assist with systematic changes throughout Maryland statute.

We urge a favorable report on House Bill 529.