



**House Judiciary Committee**

**February 11, 2020**

**House Bill 524**

**Correctional Services - Pregnant Incarcerated Individuals –  
Substance Abuse Assessment and Treatment**

**Support**

NCADD-Maryland supports House Bill 524. Last year, the General Assembly, the Governor's office, and local detention center wardens crafted first-in-the-nation legislation to require people with opioid use disorders in custody in local jails be offered medication assisted treatment. By 2023, all 24 jurisdictions in Maryland will have this capacity. HB 524 speeds up this process for women who are pregnant.

Untreated substance use disorder in pregnancy can cause disastrous results, including maternal death, poor fetal growth, preterm birth, or stillbirth. Organizations such as the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend pregnant women with opioid use disorders start medication assisted treatment with methadone or buprenorphine. These medications are shown to be safe and effective treatments for opioid use disorder during pregnancy. Studies show that the use of methadone among pregnant women is associated with higher treatment retention. The use of buprenorphine has shown lower incidences of neonatal abstinence syndrome.

The bill establishes procedures related to a pregnant woman's health, during her pregnancy and after child birth when in the State's custody. Providing appropriate medical care to people when they are in the custody of the State should not be optional. Courts are making decisions in favor of providing medication assisted treatment as a matter of people's civil rights.

We thank the sponsor for this year's bill for his continuing work in this area. We urge a favorable report on HB 524.

*The Maryland Affiliate of the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD-Maryland) is a statewide organization that works to influence public and private policies on addiction, treatment, and recovery, reduce the stigma associated with the disease, and improve the understanding of addictions and the recovery process. We advocate for and with individuals and families who are affected by alcoholism and drug addiction.*