



**Senate Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee**

**February 16, 2021**

**Senate Bill 565  
Public Health - Data - Race and Ethnicity Information**

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the pre-existing opioid overdose death fatality crisis has worsened. In Maryland, third quarter data from the Maryland Department of Health shows a 12% increase in the number of deaths in 2020, over the same period the year before. There are also disturbing trends in the impact of the crisis on communities of color. This is just one aspect of the health disparities that exist that must be addressed.

Senate Bill 565 – Public Health – Data – Race and Ethnicity Information will enhance the capacity of the Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities to collect and disseminate data relevant to evaluate and guide policy decisions to address health inequities. The effort must include developing data-driven strategies to address the worsening overdose death crisis among Black and Brown people.

We urge a favorable report on SB 565.

*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.*