



Maryland Addiction Directors Council

House Appropriations Committee

March 1, 2022

House Bill 794

Public Health – Opioid Restitution Fund Advisory Council

Support

Maryland Addiction Directors Council (MADC) strongly supports House Bill 794 to establish an Advisory Council that will provide recommendations on how funding in the Opioid Restitution Fund should be spent. MADC is an association of outpatient and residential SUD and dual recovery providers across the State of Maryland. MADC members are on the front lines of the Opioid Epidemic providing over 1,000 residential beds across the State.

Maryland was ahead of the curve and one of the first states in the country in 2019 to create an Opioid Restitution Fund to capture settlements and awards in the lawsuits against opioid manufacturers. Since that time, several national organizations have developed principles and model legislation that have influenced states around the country that have enacted their own laws. Based on these recommendations, we believe Maryland largely got it right in 2019, with just a few exceptions. This legislation proposes to add two appropriate uses to the list of items that are allowable for expenditure and creates an Advisory Council.

(over)



Maryland Addiction Directors Council

Page Two

MADC is in strong support of the creation of an Advisory Council that includes stakeholders such as families, consumers as well as clinical and public health experts. People in recovery and family members of those who have struggled with the disease can bring valuable insight into discussions about strategies, policies, and programming to help direct funding decisions. Likewise, clinicians with experience in the latest medications and therapies as well as a public health expert engaged in harm reduction services bring expertise from the field to these important discussions.

Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health's *Principles for the Use of Funds from Opioid Litigation* has developed principles as best practice to guide States and other jurisdictions. Bloomberg's report recommends including public health leaders, those with first-hand experience supporting and treating those who use drugs as well as people with lived experience.

MADC appreciates the efforts the current Administration has made to gather public input into these significant decisions. The amount of funding that will be distributed calls for a more formal and transparent process.

In closing, thank you for the opportunity to offer written testimony. Maryland Addictions Directors Council supports HB 794.

Sincerely,

Kim Wireman

Kim Wireman
Board Member, MADC



Maryland Addiction Directors Council

MADC, 3800 Frederick Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21229