



## **HB 794 – Public Health – Opioid Restitution Fund Advisory Council**

**Committee: Appropriations**

**Date: March 1, 2022**

**POSITION: Support**

**The Maryland Coalition of Families:** Maryland Coalition of Families (MCF) helps families who care for a loved one with behavioral health needs. Using personal experience, our staff provide one-to-one peer support and navigation services to family members with a child, youth or adult with a mental health, substance use or gambling issue.

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I, Beth Schmidt, as the mother of a son that lost his battle with addiction, strongly support HB 794 as HB 794 would ensure both stakeholder input and transparency in the spending of the Opioid Restitution Fund dollars.

My eldest son, Sean, lost his battle with addiction at the young age of 23, 8 years ago. My son's addiction began at the age of 19, with over prescribed opioid medications given to him by an adult. This addiction then graduated to heroin. After 18 months of sobriety, a relapse led to his death when he was given 100 percent pure fentanyl.

Fentanyl was barely on our streets in 2013 and now it has taken the lives of nearly 3,000 Marylander just last year.

My family, along with so many others who tragically lost their lives, have been most greatly impacted by the opioid overdose epidemic. Our voices must be included in all conversations about how the dollars should be spent. We appreciate that the bill designates that at least one member of the Council be a family member, however, more would be better.

HB 794 would ensure transparency and accountability in the spending of the opioid restitution funds.

I urge a favorable report on HB 794.

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