



Larry Hogan, Governor · Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor · Dennis R. Schrader, Secretary

March 1, 2022

The Honorable Maggie McIntosh
Chair, House Appropriations Committee
Room 121, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: HB 794 -Public Health – Opioid Restitution Fund Advisory Council– Letter of Information

Dear Chair McIntosh and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) respectfully submits this letter of information on House Bill (HB) 794 - Public Health – Opioid Restitution Fund Advisory Council. HB 794 will establish the Opioid Restitution Fund Advisory Council (Council) and the Council will make recommendations regarding the allocations of money from the Opioid Restitution Fund (ORF).

As written, HB 794 requires MDH's Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) to provide staff to the Council. However, the Opioid Operational Command Center (OOC) is the entity responsible for administering funds that the state receives from legal settlements associated with the opioid crisis. MDH concurs with the OOC's proposed amendments to HB 794 to specify the OOC as the agency responsible for providing staffing support to the Council. The OOC is the state unit best equipped to work alongside the Council, especially as the OOC recently created staffing positions to support grant distribution and other operations.

MDH will continue to work in close partnership with the OOC to advance this important work to address the opioid epidemic. If you would like to discuss this further, please contact Heather Shek, Director, Office of Governmental Affairs, at (410) 260-3190 or heather.shek@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

Dennis R. Schrader
Secretary