

STATE OF MARYLAND
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
OPIOID OPERATIONAL COMMAND CENTER



ROBIN E. RICKARD
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
100 COMMUNITY PLACE
CROWNSVILLE, MARYLAND 21032

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 with Amendment

Dear Chair McIntosh and Committee Members:

The Opioid Operational Command Center (OCCC) is submitting this letter of information with amendment for House Bill (HB) 794 – Public Health - Opioid Restitution Fund Advisory Council.

According to House Bill 1274 (2019), which established the Opioid Restitution Fund (ORF), the Governor is required to develop “goals, objectives, and indicators” for the use of any funding received through the ORF. Additionally, this funding must be made in accordance with the state budget. As such, Governor Hogan designated the OCCC as the entity responsible for administering funds the state receives from legal settlements with pharmaceutical manufacturers and distributors to mitigate harms associated with the opioid crisis.

Recognizing that the State of Maryland expects to receive an influx of funding through the ORF within the next calendar year, the OCCC worked to ensure we are structured to support administering this funding. These efforts include creating staffing positions to support grant distribution and other operations, which will be commensurate to the level of funding that we will receive.

As currently written, HB 794 indicates that the Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) shall provide staffing support to the advisory council. However, given that the OCCC has been designated as the entity responsible for administering ORF funds, the OCCC respectfully requests HB 794 be amended to specify the OCCC as the agency responsible for providing staffing support instead of BHA.

Additionally, HB 794 requires that the Council provide a written report to the Governor and Secretary of Health on the following criteria: (1) the number of people per capita with a substance use disorder in a jurisdiction, (2) disparities in access to care in a jurisdiction that may preclude persons, (3) the number of overdose deaths per capita in a jurisdiction, (4) programs, services, supports or other resources currently available to individuals with a substance use

disorder, and (5) disparities in access to care and health outcomes in a jurisdiction. As an interagency coordinating body, the OOCC can access all of the named indicators. Having access to these data allows us to be able to meet the reporting requirements outlined in HB 794, further reinforcing the rationale to name the OOCC in HB 794 versus BHA.

We hope you find this information helpful. If you would like to discuss this further, please contact Marianne Gibson, OOCC Deputy Director, at 443-381-4377 or marianne.gibson@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robin E. Rickard". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Robin" and last name "Rickard" being more prominent than the middle initial "E".

Robin E. Rickard
Executive Director
Opioid Operational Command Center

BY: Opioid Operational Command Center

AMENDMENT TO House Bill 794
(First Reading File Bill)

AMENDMENT NO. 1

On page 4, in line 25, strike “**BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
ADMINISTRATION**” and substitute “**OPIOID OPERATIONAL
COMMAND CENTER.**”