



**House Appropriations Committee**

**March 1, 2022**

**House Bill 794**

**Public Health – Opioid Restitution Fund Advisory Council**

**Support**

NCADD-Maryland 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.

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. When working on the legislation, we knew it would be important to ensure public input into the process of deciding how funds would be spent, and worked with the legislature ensure the law required that.

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.

The reason for the Advisory Council is to ensure several things. First, it ensures that the communities directly impacted by the opioid overdose crisis are represented in the development of recommendations. 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. Clinicians with experience in the latest medications and therapies must also be at the table. And having representation from a public health expert engaged in harm reduction services will ensure a much more informed approach to funding and policy decisions.

NCADD-Maryland appreciates the efforts the current Administration has made to gather public input into these important decisions. The amount of funding that will be distributed calls for a more formal and transparent process. We urge your support of House Bill 794.

*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.*