

SB103_ERC_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Corrie Simkin-Brocato

Position: FAV



March 8, 2024

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

SB103 – Overdose Awareness Day

POSITION: Support

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Elevate Recovery Centers, we write to support Senate Bill 103, which would require the Governor to annually proclaim August 31 as Overdose Awareness Day. We thank Senator Jackson for introducing this very important bill.

We are Managing Partners of Elevate Recovery Centers, an outpatient substance use treatment provider owned and operated in Anne Arundel County. We are residents of Anne Arundel County and persons in long term recovery. Last year, Elevate Recovery Centers served over 900 individuals, providing individuals with education and resources for early recovery from substance use disorder.

This bill is not merely symbolic; it's a crucial step toward acknowledging the pervasive challenges of drug addiction and overdose that plague our communities. Drug addiction, as outlined by both the Centers for Disease Control Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO), represents a rapidly escalating epidemic with devastating consequences, including overdose deaths.

Our advocacy for this bill is further bolstered by the successes observed in other states that have implemented similar recognitions. For instance, Pennsylvania observed its first statewide Overdoes Awareness Day in 2018, a move that has significantly increased public engagement around overdose prevention and substance use disorder education. In the following year, Pennsylvania reported a notable decrease in overdose deaths by approximately 18%, a testament to the impact of raising awareness and destigmatizing use of disorders.

Similarly, Ohio marked August 31st as Overdose Awareness Day in 2017, coupled with a statewide campaign that promoted naloxone distribution and overdose prevention strategies. This initiative led to a marked improvement in public awareness and facilitated a 22% reduction in opioid-related overdose deaths from 2017 to 2018.



Maryland is not immune to opioid crisis that grip our nation. According to the Maryland Overdose Data Dashboard there were 2,513 fatal overdoses in Maryland from October 2022 to September 2023. By dedicating a day to overdose awareness, we can amplify our collective efforts to combat this crisis, offering hope and support to those struggling with addiction.

Raising Overdose Awareness Day officially will: Raise public awareness about the dangers of drug overdose and the signs of an overdose, potentially saving lives through increased knowledge and preparedness. Reduce the stigma associated with drug-related deaths, encouraging individuals battling addiction to seek help without fear of judgement. Honoring the memory of those we have lost to drug overdoses, acknowledging the grief of families and friends left behind. This legislation represents a critical step toward addressing the overdose crisis that affects our state and nation.

By officially recognizing Overdose Awareness Day, providing and being able to shine a light on those who have survived a once, rough time in their lives, shows the heart of our state. Those who suffer from addiction and have overcome their addictions deserve to feel seen and reminded that they matter. By drawing attention together we can, reduce stigma around substance use disorders, and remember those we've lost to drug overdoses.

Senate Bill 103 represents a significant stride towards confronting the overdose crisis in Maryland with compassion, education, and actionable awareness. By aligning our efforts with successful models from other states, we can foster a community that supports recovery and prevention, ultimately reducing the number of lives lost to overdose. Through education and awareness, individuals are better informed about the dangers of substance misuse, the importance of safe prescribing practices, and the availability of life-saving interventions like naloxone, potentially preventing future overdoses.

It is for these reasons, we urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 103, affirming Maryland's commitment to preventing drug overdoses and honoring the lives affected by this ongoing epidemic. Thank you for considering our testimony.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nicholas Acosta".

Nicholas Acosta
Managing Partner
Elevate Recovery Centers

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Basile Ferro".

Basile Ferro
Managing Partner
Elevate Recovery Centers

SB 103_Overdose Awareness Day_FAVORABLE.pdf

Uploaded by: Dan Rabbitt

Position: FAV



March 8, 2024

**Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT**

SB 103 – Overdose Awareness Day

Behavioral Health System Baltimore (BHSB) is a nonprofit organization that serves as the local behavioral health authority (LBHA) for Baltimore City. BHSB works to increase access to a full range of quality behavioral health (mental health and substance use) services and advocates for innovative approaches to prevention, early intervention, treatment and recovery for individuals, families, and communities. Baltimore City represents nearly 35 percent of the public behavioral health system in Maryland, serving over 100,000 people with mental illness and substance use disorders (collectively referred to as “behavioral health”) annually.

Behavioral Health System Baltimore supports SB 103 – Overdose Awareness Day. This bill directs the Governor to proclaim August 31 as Overdose Awareness Day in recognition of the thousands of Marylanders who have lost their lives due to overdose.

The number of overdose deaths in Maryland has skyrocketed in the last ten years. About 2,500 people died of fatal overdose in the state last year, including 1,000 who die in Baltimore City.¹ This loss of life is staggering and deserves attention.

Overdose Awareness Day is an internationally recognized day of remembrance for all those impacted by addiction and overdose epidemic. Honoring this day can help raise awareness of this terrible crisis and send a strong message of hope and healing to those struggling with addiction.

The friends and family of those who have lost their lives to overdose also deserve to have their grief recognized and their lost loved ones deserve to be remembered. **BHSB urges the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee to support SB 103.**

For more information, please contact BHSB Policy Director Dan Rabbitt at 443-401-6142

References:

¹ Maryland’s Overdose Data Dashboard, available at: <https://stopoverdose.maryland.gov/dashboard/>

SB0103_MD Youth Advisory Council_Fav.pdf

Uploaded by: Grace Minakowski

Position: FAV



Maryland Youth Advisory Council
c/o Governor's Office of Crime
Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services
100 Community Place,
Crownsville, MD 21032

Grace Minakowski, *Chair*
Will O'Donnell, *Vice-Chair*
Folashade Epebinu, *Secretary*

March 8th, 2023

Re: SB 103 | Overdose Awareness Day

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee,

The Maryland Youth Advisory Council prides itself on being a coalition of diverse young advocates and leaders who serve as a voice for youth in the state of Maryland. As leaders in our communities, and as appointees of the Governor, President of the Senate, Speaker of the House, Maryland Association of Student Councils, Maryland Higher Education Commission and the University System of Maryland, we take every opportunity to address relevant issues by influencing legislation, spreading public awareness and serving as a liaison between youth and policymakers regarding issues facing youth.

Overdose and drug addiction is a crisis. As identified by the CDC and World Health Organization, overdoses transcend age, race, and gender of Marylanders. Driven largely by the use of illegally manufactured drugs like fentanyl, over 103,000 people died in the US from overdoses in the 12-month period preceding August 2023, with regions with large wealth disparities being disproportionately affected by the epidemic.¹ This same data found that rates of drug treatment for racial and ethnic minorities was lower when compared to the white demographic. Zooming in on Maryland's, in the 12 month period leading up to September 2023, 130 young people under the age of 25, out of 2596 total Marylanders, died of an overdose. Further, the rate of overdoses among youth in 2020 doubled, rising to an additional 20% compared to the ten years before the pandemic.^{2 3} It is clear our communities cannot rest until the number of overdose fatalities in Maryland reaches zero.

Overdose prevention methods like increasing the availability of addiction therapy/medical intervention, decreasing/monitoring the prescription of addictive medication/opioids, & limiting the sale of over-the-counter opioids/drugs are proven to be effective, yet less than 10% of people utilize these available treatments.⁴ As a state, we must make it known that help is *always* available, no matter what stage of drug addiction one finds themselves in. **SB 103** proclaims Overdose Awareness Day (celebrated globally on August 31st every year) as an official day in Maryland, helping to raise awareness about drug overdose, reduce stigma about addiction, and educate those struggling with addiction/the effects of addiction on treatment options. **SB 103** requires no fiscal burden or administrative bloat; the bill simply seeks to reduce the feelings of shame, guilt, and isolation that those harmed by drug addiction may feel. Recognizing Overdose Awareness Day in Maryland sends the clear message that our government stands

¹ Ahmad FB, Cisewski JA, Rossen LM, Sutton P. Provisional drug overdose death counts. National Center for Health Statistics. 2024.

² *Maryland's overdose data dashboard*. (n.d.). <https://stopoverdose.maryland.gov/dashboard/>

³ *Adolescent drug overdose deaths rose exponentially for the first time in history during the COVID pandemic*. (2022, April 12). UCLA Health. <https://www.uclahealth.org/news/adolescent-drug-overdose-deaths-rose-exponentially-first>

⁴ World Health Organization: WHO. (2023, August 29). *Opioid overdose*. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/opioid-overdose>

in solidarity with victims of lethal or non-lethal overdose and seeks to lead our state into a healthy, safer future. The Council has voted in favor of supporting **SB 103**, as it aligns with the Council's Legislative Platform supporting:

- a. Efforts to eliminate illegal use of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs (Section IV, Clause B)
- b. Providing youth access to drug counseling (Section IV, Clause C)

The Maryland General Assembly can only benefit from enacting **SB 103**. In order to shape a more positive future for our young people, we must address the real and growing epidemic of drug abuse. Marylanders, young and old alike, deserve to know where/how to seek treatment for drug abuse and to operate in a society destigmatized of addiction-related guilt. For these reasons, the Council adamantly supports **SB 103**, and respectfully requests a favorable report from the committee. We thank you for your consideration of our position.

Sincerely,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Minakowski', written in a cursive style.

Grace Minakowski, Chair
Maryland Youth Advisory Council

Maryland Catholic Conference_FAV_SB103.pdf

Uploaded by: Jenny Kraska

Position: FAV



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

March 08, 2024

SB 103
Overdose Awareness Day

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Position: Favorable

The Maryland Catholic Conference (MCC) offers this testimony in support of Senate Bill 103. The Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals, and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

Senate Bill 103 would require the Governor to annually proclaim August 31st as Overdose Awareness Day. This legislation is an important step towards raising awareness, promoting compassion, and advocating for solutions to the opioid epidemic and other forms of substance misuse.

Substance use disorders affect individuals from all walks of life and can have profound physical, emotional, and spiritual consequences. As a community guided by the principles of love, mercy, and solidarity, we are called to respond with compassion and support for those who are struggling with addiction, as well as their families and loved ones.

Designating August 31 as Overdose Awareness Day serves as a powerful reminder of the lives lost to overdose and the ongoing need for prevention, intervention, and treatment efforts. It provides an opportunity for prayer, reflection, and remembrance for those who have died from overdose, as well as a call to action for communities to come together to address the root causes of substance abuse and support individuals on their journey towards recovery and healing.

This legislation aligns with the Catholic tradition's emphasis on solidarity and the common good. By raising awareness about the overdose crisis and encouraging collective action to address it, we affirm our shared responsibility to care for the most vulnerable among us and work towards building communities of compassion, support, and hope. The MCC appreciates your consideration and, for these reasons, respectfully requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 103.

SB103.pdf

Uploaded by: John Kotz

Position: FAV



March 8, 2024

Senate Bill 103 - Overdose Awareness Day

Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

POSITION: Support

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Recovery180, we write to support Senate Bill 103, which would require the Governor to annually proclaim August 31 as Overdose Awareness Day. We thank Senator Jackson for introducing this very important bill.

Recovery180 is a low-intensity residential treatment program that provides substance abuse treatment in a structured sober living environment. We have multiple locations throughout Maryland which include Baltimore City, Carol County, and Eastern Shore. The program includes 6 months of housing and clinical services for clients as part of a comprehensive approach to addiction treatment. Clients are supported as they gain skills to improve their physical, mental, emotional, and financial health, with the goal of becoming self-sufficient and independent.

This bill is not merely symbolic; it's a crucial step toward acknowledging the pervasive challenges of drug addiction and overdose that plague our communities. Drug addiction, as outlined by both the Centers for Disease Control Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO), represents a rapidly escalating epidemic with devastating consequences, including overdose deaths.

Our advocacy for this bill is further bolstered by the successes observed in other states that have implemented similar recognitions. For instance, Pennsylvania observed its first statewide Overdoes Awareness Day in 2018, a move that has significantly increased public engagement around overdose prevention and substance use disorder education. In the following year, Pennsylvania reported a notable decrease in overdose deaths by approximately 18%, a testament to the impact of raising awareness and destigmatizing use of disorders.

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September 2023. By dedicating a day to overdose awareness, we can amplify our collective efforts to combat this crisis, offering hope and support to those struggling with addiction.

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Senate Bill 103 represents a significant stride towards confronting the overdose crisis in Maryland with compassion, education, and actionable awareness. By aligning our efforts with successful models from other states, we can foster a community that supports recovery and prevention, ultimately reducing the number of lives lost to overdose. Through education and awareness, individuals are better informed about the dangers of substance misuse, the importance of safe prescribing practices, and the availability of life-saving interventions like naloxone, potentially preventing future overdoses.

It is for these reasons, we urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 103, affirming Maryland's commitment to preventing drug overdoses and honoring the lives affected by this ongoing epidemic. Thank you for considering our testimony.

Thank you,

Dr. John Kotz
Director of Operations
Recovery180
1100 Business Parkway South
Westminster, MD 21157

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Uploaded by: Maryland State of

Position: FAV



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

March 8, 2024

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment
Miller Senate Office Building, 2 West Wing
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Senate Bill 103 - Overdose Awareness Day - Letter of Support

Dear Chair Feldman and Committee members:

The Maryland Department of Health (Department) and Maryland's Office of Overdose Response respectfully submit this letter of support for Senate Bill (SB) 103 – Overdose Awareness Day. SB 103 will require the Governor to annually announce August 31st each year as Overdose Awareness day.

Overdose Awareness Day remembers those lost to overdoses and increases awareness of substance use disorders. This day is observed each year across the globe, leading into September, which is Recovery Month. An official proclamation of August 31st as Overdose Awareness Day would emphasize Maryland's commitment to addressing the issue of substance use and overdose in our communities and would honor the many Marylanders who have died of an overdose.

If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Sarah Case-Herron, Director of the Office of Governmental Affairs at sarah.case-herron@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H.
Secretary

Emily Keller
Special Secretary of Overdose Response

2024JacksonTestimonySB103.pdf

Uploaded by: Michael Jackson

Position: FAV

MICHAEL A. JACKSON
Legislative District 27
Calvert, Charles and
Prince George's Counties

Budget and Taxation Committee

Subcommittees

Chair, Pensions

Public Safety, Transportation, and
Environment



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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TESTIMONY - SENATE BILL 103

OVERDOSE AWARENESS DAY

EDUCATION, ENERGY, & THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

MARCH 8, 2024

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and Committee Members:

Senate Bill 138 is a very straightforward bill that simply requires the Governor to annually proclaim August 31st as Overdose Awareness Day.

Each year Maryland loses thousands of residents to drug overdoses and drug-related death. The purpose of this legislation is to clearly enshrine August 31st as a date to recognize those deaths and this epidemic and to encourage those currently suffering to seek support and treatment.

As someone who spent the majority of his professional career in law enforcement, I have seen firsthand the impact that drug addiction can have on individuals and to their loved ones. Reducing the stigma attached to seeking treatment for addiction would save countless lives. I am hopeful that declaring August 31st as Overdose Awareness Day would be a means to reduce said stigma and to quell the suffering of those who are addicted and those who love them.

For the reasons listed above, I ask for a favorable report of Senate Bill 103.

NCADD-MD - 2024 SB 103 FAV - Overdose Awareness Da

Uploaded by: Nancy Rosen-Cohen

Position: FAV



Education, Energy & the Environment Committee
March 8, 2024

Senate Bill 103
Overdose Awareness Day

Support

NCADD-Maryland supports Senate Bill 103. August 31st has been recognized as Overdose Awareness Day around the world since 2001. Events are held that day in cities and towns all over the globe, in remembrance of those lost to overdoses.

Awareness days are opportunities for community groups, employers, schools, and local officials to conduct educational and advocacy events to promote prevention and policies that create greater access to treatment, harm reduction services, and recovery supports. These events are also intended to reduce the stigma associated with the disease and help those still grieving find comfort among those who have also lost loved one.

NCADD-Maryland believes that more attention brought to this tragic crisis that continues to worsen is worthwhile. We urge your support of Senate Bill 103.

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.

National Council on Alcoholism & Drug Dependence – Maryland Chapter
28 E. Ostend Street, Suite 303, Baltimore, MD 21230 · 410-625-6482 · fax 410-625-6484
www.ncaddmaryland.org

SB103 Mayor Mahoney Testimony of Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Patrick Mahoney

Position: FAV

Good Afternoon Honorable Senators,

SB103 - Favorable

I am Chesapeake Beach Mayor Pat Mahoney testifying on behalf of the residents and Town Council of Chesapeake Beach, Maryland to express our support for Senate Bill 103 recognizing August 31st as Overdose Awareness Day in the state in recognition of family and friends lost to drug overdoses.

In our small town of Chesapeake Beach, there have been more than 104 reported overdoses and 17 deaths attributed to Opioid Use Disorder since 2016, devastating families and impacting us all. Since January of 2017, I, the Town Council, residents of Chesapeake Beach, and community partners, through our Twin Beach Opioid Abuse Awareness Coalition chaired by Town Councilman Pardieck, have worked diligently to raise addiction awareness with our residents, connect those in need with prevention, recovery and support resources, reduce the shame surrounding this disorder, and most importantly -- help save lives. Outreach and education to connect people with recovery resources and reduce stigma work. In 2016, Chesapeake Beach had 14 non-fatal overdoses and 5 fatal overdoses; in 2023 we had 6 nonfatal overdoses and 0 fatal overdoses. Yet more needs to be done, especially to reduce the stigma surrounding addiction so the people afflicted with this disease and their family members seek and get the support they need. And SB103 is a step in the right direction.

This bill provides several important messages from our state leaders to our residents. They are: 1) drug addiction is a disease, not a character flaw; 2) those who have died from this affliction, and those who continue to struggle with addiction and their families are valued by us; and 3) overdose death is preventable.

For these reasons we support SB103 and encourage you to support it as well.

Sincerely,

Patrick J. Mahoney

Mayor, Chesapeake Beach

SB103 Testamony.pdf

Uploaded by: Peter Fitzpatrick

Position: FAV

Citizen Testimony on SB0103 Overdose Awareness Day

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I'm here to ask you for a favorable report on **SB0103 Overdose Awareness Day**.

My older son, Sam, was funny kid. The kind of little kid who thought the trash incinerator on I-95 in Baltimore was where they made clouds, and once couldn't understand why a snowman he'd made didn't come alive when a hat was placed on its head. It wasn't all rosy, though. As Sam grew into an adult he struggled with mental health and addiction. He fought his disease as best he could. Sam died from a fentanyl overdose in May of 2022. With his death, the world lost a little of its light and goodness and my world – my family's world – was shattered.

The thing is, I'm not here to ask you to designate August 31st as Overdose Awareness Day for me. I'm quite sure I couldn't be more aware of the overdose crisis in our state if I tried. I'm also not here to ask you to do it for Sam's memory, because nothing could make his memory greater in my mind. I'm not here to ask you to do it for the memories of Matt or Rob – brothers of friends, or Kevin – a former neighbor, or even Walker – a kid who grew up with Sam. I'm not asking for that because I know nothing can bring them back, and no piece of legislation can unbreak their family's hearts any more than it can unbreak mine. I'm asking you to report favorably on this bill because if it fails, I'll be back here next year. I'll be back here with a longer list of names. A new set of names. A new set of families whose worlds have been shattered.

The overdose crisis is a man-made problem. Man-made problems require man-made solutions. We've done it before. We've taken on man-made plagues and beaten every one we've set our mind to beating. Highway deaths, polluted waterways, the ozone hole, second-hand smoke – all turned around simply because we decided to turn them around. We can do the same with opioid overdoses.

The first step in solving any problem is making sure people are aware of the consequences of not. Awareness isn't a billboard, a soundbite, or a hashtag. It's a step. It's the first step towards a solution. It's the first step toward my list of names not getting any bigger, and the first step toward the next father's heart staying unbroken.

To that end, I ask you for a favorable report on this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

Pete Fitzpatrick
RN, BSN, CFRN, NRP
Catonsville, MD
443-695-4297

SB103_RHTC_FAV_.pdf

Uploaded by: Therese Hessler

Position: FAV



March 8, 2024

Senate Bill 103 - Overdose Awareness Day

Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

POSITION: Support

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Recovery Housing & Treatment Centers Coalition of Maryland (RHTC), we write to support Senate Bill 103, which would require the Governor to annually proclaim August 31 as Overdose Awareness Day.

RHTC is a coalition of recovery homes and treatment centers located throughout Maryland. We are deeply committed to our organization's mission to addressing the opioid crisis and supporting individuals and families affected by substance use disorders.

This bill is not merely symbolic; it's a crucial step toward acknowledging the pervasive challenges of drug addiction and overdose that plague our communities. Drug addiction, as outlined by both the Centers for Disease Control Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO), represents a rapidly escalating epidemic with devastating consequences, including overdose deaths.

Our advocacy for this bill is further bolstered by the successes observed in other states that have implemented similar recognitions. For instance, Pennsylvania observed its first statewide Overdoes Awareness Day in 2018, a move that has significantly increased public engagement around overdose prevention and substance use disorder education. In the following year, Pennsylvania reported a notable decrease in overdose deaths by approximately 18%, a testament to the impact of raising awareness and destigmatizing use of disorders.

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Senate Bill 103 represents a significant stride towards confronting the overdose crisis in Maryland with compassion, education, and actionable awareness. By aligning our efforts with successful models from other states, we can foster a community that supports recovery and prevention, ultimately reducing the number of lives lost to overdose. Through education and awareness, individuals are better informed about the dangers of substance misuse, the importance of safe prescribing practices, and the availability of life-saving interventions like naloxone, potentially preventing future overdoses.

It is for these reasons, we urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 103, affirming Maryland's commitment to preventing drug overdoses and honoring the lives affected by this ongoing epidemic. Thank you for considering our testimony.

For more information, please contact:

Therese Hessler, Ashlar Government Relations | 301-503-2576 | therese@ashlargr.com