

NCADD-MD - 2025 SB 589 FAV - ORF Dashboard - Senat

Uploaded by: Ann Ciekot

Position: FAV



**Senate Finance Committee
February 18, 2025**

**Senate Bill 589 - Opioid Restitution Fund – Interactive Dashboard
Support**

On behalf of the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence - Maryland (NCADD-MD), we strongly support Senate Bill 589, which would establish an interactive dashboard to track and share information regarding the Opioid Restitution Fund (ORF). This bill represents a crucial step toward ensuring transparency and accountability in how opioid settlement dollars are allocated and spent across the state and local levels. Given the devastating impact of the opioid epidemic on Maryland’s communities, it is essential that these funds are managed with public oversight to ensure they are used effectively for prevention, treatment, and recovery efforts.

For years, communities have called for greater transparency in the distribution and use of opioid settlement funds. Senate Bill 589 would address this need by creating a publicly accessible dashboard that details how ORF dollars are spent at the state, county, and municipal levels. Maryland has already demonstrated its ability to implement such transparency initiatives, as seen with the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dashboard, which provided the public with clear reporting on how Baltimore City allocated federal relief funds. Additionally, the Maryland Department of Health has already developed and released an enhanced Overdose Data Dashboard, which further proves that the necessary technology and infrastructure exist to successfully establish this new dashboard without significant additional costs.

By requiring counties and municipalities receiving opioid settlement funds to report detailed financial information to the Department of Health for inclusion in the dashboard, this legislation ensures a higher level of accountability. The dashboard will provide a clear breakdown of estimated payments from settlements, past spending, current spending priorities, and descriptions of funded initiatives. Moreover, it will enhance public engagement by including information on hearings regarding the use of these funds, allowing communities to have a voice in how resources are distributed.

(over)

This level of transparency is essential not only to maintain public trust but also to ensure that the funding decisions are data-driven and aligned with the intended purpose of the opioid settlements. By leveraging existing platforms that already provide data on opioid use and overdoses in Maryland, the state can efficiently develop and maintain this dashboard without unnecessary delays or expenses. Furthermore, ensuring that opioid settlement dollars are tracked and publicly reported will empower advocates, policymakers, and the public to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of these funds in addressing the opioid crisis.

For these reasons, NCADD-MD urges the Senate Finance Committee to issue a **favorable report on Senate Bill 589**. We believe this legislation will reinforce Maryland's commitment to responsible and transparent financial stewardship in combating the opioid epidemic, ultimately improving outcomes for those affected by substance use disorder.

SB0589_FAV_MedChi_Opioid Restitution Fund - Intera

Uploaded by: Christine Krone

Position: FAV



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Senate Finance Committee
February 18, 2025
Senate Bill 589 – *Opioid Restitution Fund – Interactive Dashboard*
POSITION: SUPPORT

The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), the largest physician organization in Maryland, supports Senate Bill 589. This bill mandates the Maryland Office of Overdose Response, in collaboration with the Maryland Department of Health (MDH), to develop and maintain an interactive public dashboard that tracks Opioid Restitution Fund spending. Public trust in government institutions is paramount, particularly when handling funds intended for public health crises.

By requiring the Maryland Office of Overdose Response and MDH to develop this interactive dashboard, the bill ensures that all stakeholders can access real-time, detailed information on how opioid settlement funds are allocated and spent. The inclusion of payment schedules, past expenditures, spending plans, and performance measures will provide a comprehensive view of the fund's impact.

This transparency will prevent mismanagement or inefficiencies and will hold responsible entities accountable for the appropriate use of resources. Furthermore, the dashboard will be funded through the Opioid Restitution Fund as appropriated in the state budget, ensuring no additional financial burden on taxpayers or general state funds. For these reasons, MedChi supports Senate Bill 589.

For more information call:

Christine K. Krone
J. Steven Wise
Danna L. Kauffman
Andrew G. Vetter
410-244-7000

SB 589_ORF Dashboard_BHSB_FAVORABLE.pdf

Uploaded by: Dan Rabbitt

Position: FAV



February 18, 2025

**Senate Finance Committee
TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT**

SB 589 - Opioid Restitution Fund - Interactive Dashboard

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 589 - Opioid Restitution Fund - Interactive Dashboard. Public transparency is the best way to ensure the Opioid Restitution Fund (ORF) is only used for effective opioid abatement strategies.

Maryland and its local jurisdictions are poised to receive considerable resources through the opioid settlement process. These resources, currently estimated at over \$650 million, can be transformative in the state’s efforts to prevent overdose. It will be tempting, however, to use these funds to address budget shortfalls or fund favored programs rather than focusing entirely on opioid abatement. The tobacco settlement and the experience of other states in managing their opioid settlement dollars provide cautionary tales. It is estimated that only 3% of tobacco settlement funds went to programs to prevent smoking and help people quit.¹ A similar result could occur with the ORF without proper transparency.

SB589 sets out to provide transparency through a public dashboard. The dashboard would provide information on funding allocations and program descriptions broken down by jurisdiction. It would also provide information on public hearings on ORF spending and priorities. This information would provide an important safeguard to ensure funds are used appropriately. This would also not impact the state budget since ORF dollars would be used to create and maintain the dashboard. **BHSB urges the Senate Finance Committee to pass SB 589.**

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

Endnotes:

¹ Berk J, Bailer D, Marshall B. How to Make Sure Opioid Settlement Money Isn’t Wasted. Stat News. October 23, 2024. Available at <https://www.statnews.com/2024/10/23/opioid-settlement-funds-states-spending-projects-evidence/>.

ORF transparency FAV SB 589 MDDCSAM.pdf

Uploaded by: Joseph Adams, MD

Position: FAV



MDDCSAM is the Maryland state chapter of the American Society of Addiction Medicine whose members are physicians and other health providers who treat people with substance use disorders.

SB 589 Opioid Restitution Fund - Interactive Dashboard. Senate Finance Committee. Feb 18, 2025

FAVORABLE

“There are worryingly few rules for state or local governments to report how they spend any of the money. . . **Shockingly, most opioid settlement agreements do not require states and localities to report their opioid remediation expenditures to the public.**”

Christine Minhee, JD., founder of www.opioidsettlementtracker.com,

“Public reporting of the settlement expenditures is not required by the settlements themselves, so we're in wild west territory. **“Without full transparency, states will be unable to meaningfully evaluate or modify spending over the 15 – 18 years that these funds will be dispersed, and there are a great many ways that funds could be used ineffectively.”**

Christine Minhee, JD., founder of www.opioidsettlementtracker.com,

As of January 31, 2024, 18 states have reported or will report 100% of their opioid settlement spend to the public: AZ, CO, CT, DE, FL, ID, IN, MA, MI, MO, NH, NJ, NC, OR, SC, SD, UT, WA

Maryland is not among them. www.opioidsettlementtracker.com/publicreporting

“The opportunity for trouble is massive with \$50 billion. Is it cronyism? Is it waste, fraud & abuse? Because you can't look at it. It's all back door secret stuff, and that's scary.”

Jonathan Stoltman, Executive Director, Opioid Policy Institute (<https://opioidpolicy.org>)

“Regarding opioid settlement funds, “In New York State, once that money started rolling in, public health advocates were shocked at where most of it seemed to be going.”

Last Week Tonight with John Oliver - Opioid Settlements May 16, 2024
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Io0yuH1CiA0> at 7:50

“21 million dollars went into New York’s General Fund, to fill budget gaps, and that’s absolutely inexcusable.”

Dr. Jeffrey Reynolds, Family and Children’s Association; IBID Last Week Tonight at 8:07

“As state and local governments begin spending billions in opioid settlement funds, **one of the loudest, most frequent questions from the public has been: Where are the dollars going?** Victims of the crisis, advocates, and public policy experts have repeatedly called on governments to transparently report how they’re using these funds

“When jurisdictions don’t publicly report their spending — or publish without meaningful details — **the public is robbed of an opportunity to hold elected officials accountable.** People need to see the names of organizations receiving the money and descriptions of their work to ensure projects are not replacing existing funding streams to save money.”

from KFF Health News November 7, 2024

<https://www.npr.org/sections/shots-health-news/2024/11/06/nx-s1-5182304/transparency-accountability-opioid-settlement-funds>

Baltimore City established a required Transparency & Accountability Plan in August 2024, as part of the framework for the administration of opioid restitution funds in Baltimore

City of Baltimore Opioid Restitution Fund Transparency & Accountability Plan

https://www.baltimorecity.gov/sites/default/files/opioid_transparency_accountability_plan.p#:~:text=The%20Principles%20for%20the%20Use,use%20of%20opioid%20settlement%20funds

We urge a favorable report.

Respectfully, Joseph A. Adams, MD, FASAM

The Maryland-DC Society of Addiction Medicine

<https://md-dcsam.org>

info@md-dcsam.org

MD Addiction Directors Council - SB 589 FAV Opiod

Uploaded by: Kim Wireman

Position: FAV



Maryland Addictions Directors Council

Senate Finance Committee

February 14, 2025 - Written Testimony in Support of

SB 589 (2025) Opioid Restitution Fund – Interactive Dashboard

Maryland Addictions Directors Council (MADC) represents outpatient and residential SUD and dual recovery treatment across the State of Maryland. Our members provide over 1,800 treatment beds across Maryland and provide treatment on the front lines of the Opioid Epidemic.

Maryland Addictions Directors Council (MADC) strongly supports Senate Bill 589, which would establish an interactive dashboard to track and share information regarding the Opioid Restitution Fund (ORF). This bill represents a crucial step toward ensuring transparency and accountability in how opioid settlement dollars are allocated and spent across the state and local levels. Given the devastating impact of the opioid epidemic on Maryland's communities, it is essential that these funds are managed with public oversight to ensure they are used effectively for prevention, treatment, and recovery efforts.

For years, communities have called for greater transparency in the distribution and use of opioid settlement funds. Senate Bill 589 would address this need by creating a publicly accessible dashboard that details how ORF dollars are spent at the state, county, and municipal levels. Maryland has already demonstrated its ability to implement such transparency initiatives, as seen with the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dashboard, which provided the public with clear reporting on how Baltimore City allocated federal relief funds. Additionally, the Maryland Department of Health has already developed and released an enhanced Overdose Data Dashboard, which further proves that the necessary technology and infrastructure exist to successfully establish this new dashboard without significant additional costs.

By requiring counties and municipalities that are receiving opioid settlement funds to report detailed financial information to the Department of Health for inclusion in the dashboard, this legislation ensures a higher level of accountability. The dashboard will provide a clear breakdown of estimated payments from settlements, past spending, current spending priorities, and descriptions of funded initiatives. Moreover, it will enhance public engagement by including information on hearings regarding the use of these funds, allowing communities to have a voice in how resources are distributed.

(over)

SB 589 (2025) Opioid Restitution Fund – Interactive Dashboard

This level of transparency is essential not only to maintain public trust but also to ensure that the funding decisions are data-driven and aligned with the intended purpose of the opioid settlements. By leveraging existing platforms that already provide data on opioid use and overdoses in Maryland, the state can efficiently develop and maintain this dashboard without unnecessary delays or expenses. Furthermore, ensuring that opioid settlement dollars are tracked and publicly reported will empower advocates, policymakers, and the public to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of these funds in addressing the opioid crisis.

For these reasons, MADC urges the Senate Finance Committee to issue a favorable report on Senate Bill 589. We believe this legislation will reinforce Maryland’s commitment to responsible and transparent financial stewardship in combating the opioid epidemic, ultimately improving outcomes for those affected by substance use disorder.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer written testimony. Maryland Addictions Directors Council strongly supports SB 589.

SB589_Testimony_SenAugustine.pdf

Uploaded by: Malcolm Augustine

Position: FAV

MALCOLM AUGUSTINE
Legislative District 47
Prince George's County

PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

Executive Nominations Committee

Education, Energy and the
Environment Committee



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
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February 18, 2025

The Honorable Pamela G. Beidle
Chairwoman, Senate Finance Committee
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SB589 – Opioid Restitution Fund – Interactive Dashboard

Position: **Favorable**

Chair Beidle and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present Senate Bill 589, which strengthens transparency and accountability in Maryland's use of opioid settlement funds. This bill ensures that the public has clear, comprehensive, and real-time access to information on how these funds are allocated and utilized through an interactive dashboard, building on an existing platform already maintained by the state.

Maryland currently operates the Overdose Data Dashboard¹ through the Maryland Office of Overdose Response, which tracks overdose trends, treatment outcomes, and related data. This existing infrastructure provides a valuable opportunity to seamlessly integrate opioid restitution fund tracking. By leveraging this proven platform, Senate Bill 589 builds on established systems to strengthen public accountability and support data-driven decision-making.

The Problem – A Lack of Transparency in Opioid Settlement Spending

Maryland, like many states, is receiving substantial settlement funds from opioid manufacturers and distributors to address the devastating impact of the opioid crisis. Funds deposited in the Opioid Restitution Fund (ORF) are managed at the state level for opioid abatement initiatives, while local jurisdictions receive direct payments not allocated through the ORF.²

¹ <https://health.maryland.gov/dataoffice/Pages/mdh-dashboards.aspx>

² <https://stopoverdose.maryland.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/34/2024/11/Revised-FY-2024-State-Finance-and-Procurement-Article-%C2%A7-7%E2%80%933331-%E2%80%9494-Opioid-Restitution-Fund-Expenditure-Report-MSAR-14240.pdf>

As of the end of FY 2024, Maryland has cumulatively received \$201.2 million, with \$158.4 million deposited into the ORF and \$42.8 million distributed directly to local jurisdictions.³ Although the Governor submits an annual expenditure report to the Legislature on ORF spending⁴, Maryland has yet to ensure that this information is easily accessible to the public beyond the formal reporting process⁵.

Local jurisdictions have discretion over how to use their \$42.8 million in direct payments provided they follow state guidelines. However, they are not required to publicly report how these funds are allocated beyond compliance with state audits⁶. Without standardized, real-time public reporting, it is difficult to assess whether these funds are being used effectively and equitably to address the opioid crisis. This gap in oversight raises concerns about potential inconsistencies in local spending, delayed interventions, and missed opportunities to address urgent needs in the opioid crisis.

The Information Gap

Several states, including Massachusetts⁷, North Carolina⁸, Delaware⁹, New York¹⁰, and Florida¹¹, have already taken steps to enhance transparency and accountability in opioid settlement fund spending by establishing interactive public dashboards that track how these funds are allocated.

Unlike these states, Maryland lacks a centralized, interactive system to provide clear, up-to-date information on opioid settlement spending. In fact, in December 2024, the Maryland Office of Overdose Response issued its report¹² on “Opioid Restitution Fund Public Reporting Recommendations,” explicitly recognizing this gap and recommending the need to “explore creating an interactive dashboard.” The report further states:

Admittedly, Maryland’s processes for sharing this information [on prescription opioid-related settlement funds] are less sophisticated than other states and could be improved to increase transparency and public accessibility. For example, Maryland’s current reporting

³ <https://stopoverdose.maryland.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/34/2024/11/Revised-FY-2024-State-Finance-and-Procurement-Article-%C2%A7-7%E2%80%93331-%E2%80%94Opioid-Restitution-Fund-Expenditure-Report-MSAR-14240.pdf>

⁴ State Finance and Procurement Article § 7–331 (Chapter 537 of the Acts of 2019) and in accordance with § 2–1257 of the State Government Article

⁵ <https://www.opioidsettlementguides.com/maryland>

⁶ <https://www.opioidsettlementguides.com/maryland>

⁷ Massachusetts Statewide Opioid Settlements Municipal Dashboard. <https://caremass.org/data-dashboard/>

⁸ CORE-NC: Community Opioid Resources Engine for North Carolina. <https://ncopioidsettlement.org/data-dashboards/>

⁹ The Delaware Prescription Opioid Settlement Tracker

<https://app.powerbigov.us/view?r=eyJrIjoieZjdNTUzMzktN2ZmOC00YmI3LWJjN2UtYmY3NmYyMzdldDQwIiwidCI6IjhjMDIiNTY5LTUxYzUtNGRlZS1hYmlyLThiOTljMzJhNDM5NiJ9>

¹⁰ New York State Opioid Settlement Fund Tracker. <https://oasas.ny.gov/fy-2023-opioid-settlement-fund-initiatives>

¹¹ Florida Opioid Settlement Portal.

<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/publish?EQBCT=ff1143317c264ed9be332f9051fb5a53>

¹² <https://stopoverdose.maryland.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/34/2024/12/Public-Reporting-Recommendations-for-Opioid-Restitution-Fund-Expenditures.pdf>

framework does not use an interactive dashboard, which, if implemented, could facilitate access to this vital information.

Without a centralized, real-time tracking tool, policymakers and the public cannot monitor whether funds are being used effectively, which undermines accountability and trust. By establishing a user-friendly, real-time dashboard, Maryland can ensure that opioid settlement funds are managed transparently, efficiently, and in alignment with their intended purpose.

What SB589 Does – A Public, Interactive Dashboard

SB589 includes the following requirements, effective October 1, 2025.

- The Maryland Office of Overdose Response, in collaboration with the Maryland Department of Health, must develop and maintain an interactive dashboard that publicly shares information on ORF spending.
- The dashboard must be developed and maintained using funds from the ORF, appropriated through the state budget.
- The dashboard (disaggregated by state, county, and municipality) must include
 - Payment schedule information, including estimated payments from opioid settlements.
 - Past spending of settlement funds.
 - Planned spending priorities.
 - Details on funded initiatives, including performance measures when applicable.
 - Information on public hearings related to the use of settlement funds.
- Counties and municipalities receiving opioid settlement funds must provide financial information to the Department for inclusion in the dashboard. The Department must establish an online portal for reporting or uploading the required data.
- The dashboard should leverage existing platforms that already provide data on opioid use and overdoses in the state where practicable.

Why SB589 is Critical to Maryland’s Opioid Response

By following the lead of these states and passing SB589, Maryland’s publicly accessible dashboard will empower communities and policymakers by providing clear data on fund allocation and impact. Making this information available to the public will:

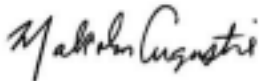
- Track how counties and municipalities use opioid funds to ensure alignment with settlement agreements and state requirements.
- Identify best practices and successful programs that can be expanded statewide to maximize impact.
- Hold decision-makers accountable by ensuring funds go where they are needed most to prevent misuse or inefficiencies.
- Provide data-driven insights to support ongoing policymaking and funding decisions.
- Engage the public and stakeholders by increasing transparency and fostering community involvement in opioid response strategies.

Conclusion

As stated above, Maryland already maintains an opioid data dashboard through the Maryland Office of Overdose Response, which tracks overdose trends and treatment data. My office has engaged with the Maryland Office of Overdose Response and the Maryland Department of Health, **both of which have confirmed that opioid settlement funding data can be integrated into this existing system.** The necessary infrastructure is in place, the technical capacity exists, and the agencies responsible for implementation are prepared to carry out this task, which allows Maryland to provide real-time public oversight of these critical funds without delay.

Moreover, the estimated \$80,000 needed to develop and maintain the dashboard is already available through the Opioid Restitution Fund, which makes this a fiscally responsible, high-impact initiative that strengthens transparency and accountability in Maryland's opioid response efforts.

Chair Beidle and members of the committee, I urge you to issue a favorable report on SB589. Maryland has an unprecedented opportunity to set a national standard for transparency in opioid settlement fund spending. By implementing a public, interactive dashboard, we can ensure every dollar is used efficiently to address the opioid crisis, provide life-saving treatment, and rebuild affected communities.



Sincerely, Senator Malcolm Augustine
President Pro Tempore -- District 47 -- Prince George's County

SB 592.pdf

Uploaded by: Taylor Dickerson

Position: FAV



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www.marylandpsychology.org

February 14, 2025

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Senator Pamela Beidle, Chair
Senator Antonio Hayes, Vice Chair
Finance Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 3 East
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SB 592 Public Health – Health Care Quality Fund for Community-Based Behavioral Health Programs – Establishment
Position: SUPPORT

Dear Chair, Vice-Chair Hayes, and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Psychological Association, (MPA), which represents over 1,000 doctoral level psychologists throughout the state, asks the Senate Finance Committee to **FAVORABLY report on SB 592**.

We are writing to provide strong support for SB 592 which requires that civil penalties from behavioral health programs not in compliance with quality standards be paid to a fund designed to provide funding to improve the quality of behavioral health care. Ensuring high-quality behavioral health care is critical to the well-being of our communities, and this fund would provide much-needed resources to improve services across the state. By holding non-compliant programs accountable and reinvesting those funds into training, grants, and other quality improvement initiatives, Maryland can enhance the effectiveness and accessibility of behavioral health care for those who need it most. We ask you to support this initiative to strengthen our behavioral health system and improve outcomes for individuals and families across our state.

We urge the Committee to issue a **favorable report on SB 592**. If we can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact MPA's Legislative Chair, Dr. Stephanie Wolf, JD, Ph.D. at mpalegislativcommittee@gmail.com.

Respectfully submitted,

David Goode-Cross, Ph.D.

David Goode-Cross, Ph.D.

President

Stephanie Wolf, JD, Ph.D.

Stephanie Wolf, JD, Ph.D.

Chair, MPA Legislative Committee

cc: Richard Bloch, Esq., Counsel for Maryland Psychological Association
Barbara Brocato & Dan Shattuck, MPA Government Affairs

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SB589_RHTC_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Therese Hessler

Position: FAV



February 18, 2025

Senate Finance Committee

SB589 - Opioid Restitution Fund - Interactive Dashboard

POSITION: FAVORABLE

The Recovery Housing & Treatment Center Coalition of Maryland (RHTC) submits this testimony in strong support of Senate Bill 589 (SB589), which seeks to establish an interactive dashboard on Opioid Restitution Fund spending to ensure transparency and accountability in the use of opioid settlement funds across the State.

RHTC represents a diverse network of recovery residences, group homes, treatment centers, and essential services that support Maryland's comprehensive continuum of care. Our mission is to educate the public, policymakers, and stakeholders on the critical role that recovery facilities play in the health and well-being of individuals overcoming substance use disorders (SUDs), as well as the broader benefits to our communities and the State.

Maryland, like the rest of the country, has been deeply affected by the opioid crisis. With significant funds flowing into the State through opioid-related settlements, it is imperative that these resources are allocated efficiently and effectively. The interactive dashboard proposed under SB589 will provide real-time, publicly accessible data on how these funds are distributed and spent, ensuring they are directed toward evidence-based recovery and treatment programs.

Many recovery residences and treatment centers continue to struggle with funding gaps, making it difficult to provide stable housing, peer support, and long-term recovery services. By tracking spending priorities and past allocations, the dashboard will help identify gaps in funding and reinforce the need for sustainable investments in long-term recovery infrastructure.

SB589 mandates that counties and municipalities receiving opioid settlement funds provide detailed descriptions of funded initiatives, including performance measures where applicable. This level of transparency will foster trust between policymakers, service providers, and the recovery community by ensuring that settlement funds are being used effectively to address the opioid epidemic rather than diverted elsewhere.



To combat the opioid epidemic effectively, we must utilize data to guide policymaking. The dashboard's integration with existing data on opioid use and overdoses in Maryland will offer insights into treatment and recovery outcomes, ultimately leading to more informed policy decisions at the local and state levels.

As an organization deeply invested in expanding access to recovery housing and treatment services, RHTC urges the Maryland General Assembly to pass SB589. Ensuring that opioid restitution funds are used effectively will strengthen Maryland's recovery infrastructure and help countless individuals rebuild their lives.

We thank the bill's sponsors for their leadership on this important issue and respectfully urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 589.

For more information call or email:

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

SB0589-FIN_MACo_SWA.pdf

Uploaded by: Sarah Sample

Position: FWA



Senate Bill 589

Opioid Restitution Fund - Interactive Dashboard

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Finance Committee

WITH AMENDMENTS

Date: February 18, 2025

From: Karrington Anderson and Sarah Sample

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS SB 589 WITH AMENDMENTS**. This bill seeks to enhance public transparency by requiring the Maryland Office of Overdose Response (MOOR) and the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) to develop and maintain an interactive dashboard detailing opioid restitution fund spending. The dashboard would provide critical information, including estimated settlement payments to the State and local jurisdictions, past and planned spending, and performance measures for funded initiatives.

While counties support the goal of transparency in opioid settlement fund allocations and spending, MACo respectfully requests amendments to ensure the bill aligns with existing robust county reporting requirements and avoids redundant administrative burdens.

Counties are already subject to copious reporting obligations under multiple funding mechanisms, including:

- **Opioid Restitution Fund (ORF) – 15%** (State use)
- **Targeted Abatement Subfund (TAS) – 60%**
 - 15% (State use – Competitive grants)
 - 45% (Local – Non-competitive grants)
- **Local Allocation – 25%** (Local use, subject to settlement agreement and State law)

Each funding stream requires extensive reporting to the State, which already collects and audits this information under the National Settlement Agreement and the State Subdivision Agreement. Counties submit detailed abatement plans, which are updated every five years, as well as quarterly grant applications, and performance reports for discretionary funds. Additionally, counties provide compliance reports for opioid remediation programs funded by state and federal sources, such as the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention (GOCCP).

Rather than requiring local jurisdictions to submit duplicative reports, SB 589 should direct the Department or MOOR to synthesize and publish information from existing county submissions. This will ensure transparency without creating unnecessary administrative burdens that could divert resources from local opioid remediation efforts.

Finally, the bill as introduced mandates that each local government entity update the State on each public hearing related to the use of settlement funds. This would surely obligate a torrent of unmanageable data to the State, and an ongoing and diffuse burden on local governing bodies.

Counties remain committed to accountability in opioid settlement spending while prioritizing meaningful, life-saving initiatives. MACo urges the Committee to issue a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** report on SB 589, and seek a more administratively workable path.

MACo Amendments on SB 589:

On page 2, in lines 15-18, strike "INFORMATION" down through "RESTITUTION FUND" and substitute "**A LINK TO THE STATE, COUNTY, OR MUNICIPALITY WEBSITE FOR THE PURPOSES OF PROVIDING ACCESS TO INFORMATION ON THE RESPECTIVE STATE, COUNTY, OR MUNICIPALITY'S USE OF SETTLEMENT FUNDS.**";

On page 2, in line 25, after "(3)" insert "**THE DEPARTMENT SHALL UPLOAD OPIOID-RELATED SETTLEMENT INFORMATION SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT BY A COUNTY OR MUNICIPALITY IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE TERMS OF ANY OPIOID-RELATED SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT.**

(4)"; and

On page 2, after line 27, insert "**(5) A COUNTY OR MUNICIPALITY THAT COMPLIES WITH EXISTING OPIOID SETTLEMENT REPORTING REQUIREMENTS AND HAS SHARED THAT DATA WITH THE APPROPRIATE STATE ENTITY SHALL BE DETERMINED TO HAVE COMPLIED WITH THIS SUBSECTION.**".

SB589 - MOOR - LOI.docx.pdf

Uploaded by: Emily Keller

Position: INFO



Maryland's Office of Overdose Response

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Emily Keller, Special Secretary of Overdose Response

February 18, 2025

The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

RE: Senate Bill 589 - Opioid Restitution Fund - Interactive Dashboard

Dear Chair Beidle:

Maryland's Office of Overdose Response (MOOR) respectfully submits this letter of information for Senate Bill (SB) 589, which would require MOOR and the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) to develop and maintain an interactive dashboard on Opioid Restitution Fund (ORF) spending and would require counties and municipalities receiving settlement funding to provide certain information to MOOR and MDH to include on the dashboard.

MDH currently maintains the state's Overdose Data Dashboard.¹ This interactive dashboard contains a multitude of important overdose data, including current overdose mortality rates, historic trends, EMS naloxone administrations, and overdose-related emergency department visits. If SB589 passes, MOOR would allocate funds from the ORF to MDH in order for MDH to further develop this existing dashboard to meet the new requirements imposed by SB589. MOOR estimates that this would cost \$72,708 in FY26 for development and \$2,000 in subsequent fiscal years for maintenance costs.

SB589 also would require the dashboard to include information on public hearings about the ORF conducted at the state, county, and municipal levels. Currently, locals are not required by the state to have or report public meetings, and it could be challenging for the dashboard developers to maintain an accurate and updated list on public hearings. Instead, the dashboard could feature a link to each local jurisdiction's most relevant government webpage.

If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Benjamin Fraifeld, Associate Director for Policy & Advocacy at MOOR, 443-346-3013.

Sincerely,

Emily Keller
Special Secretary of Overdose Response

¹ <https://health.maryland.gov/dataoffice/Pages/mdh-dashboards.aspx>

SB589 - MDH- FIN -LOI.docx (1).pdf

Uploaded by: Meghan Lynch

Position: INFO



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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

February 18, 2025

The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair Finance Committee
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Senate Bill (SB) 589 – Opioid Restitution Fund - Interactive Dashboard– Letter of Information

Dear Chair Beidle:

The Maryland Department of Health (Department) respectfully submits this letter of information for Senate Bill (SB) 589 –Opioid Restitution Fund - Interactive Dashboard.

Senate Bill 589 would mandate the Maryland Office of Overdose Response (MOOR), in collaboration with the Maryland Department of Health (Department), to develop and maintain an interactive dashboard that publicly displays expenditures from the Opioid Restitution Fund (ORF). The dashboard will track the allocation of opioid settlement funds across state and local jurisdictions, thereby enhancing transparency and accountability in the efforts to mitigate the opioid crisis.

The Department acknowledges the importance of data-driven oversight to ensure that ORF allocations are utilized effectively for opioid prevention, treatment, and recovery initiatives. The proposed dashboard will serve as a centralized tool for monitoring fund distribution, program performance, and spending trends, thus supporting informed decision-making for policymakers and stakeholders.

However, the Department notes that implementing SB 589 will require a phased approach to allow local jurisdictions and agencies adequate time to align their reporting structures with the new requirements.

Local governments receiving ORF grants may need to establish or modify internal data tracking systems to comply with standardized reporting, which could present initial administrative challenges, especially for smaller jurisdictions with limited resources. Additionally, while the legislation specifies that ORF appropriations will cover dashboard development, ongoing system maintenance, cybersecurity measures, and technical support, additional resources may be required.

The Department remains committed to assisting MOOR in this initiative and ensuring the successful implementation of measures that promote accountability in Maryland's response to the opioid crisis.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Laura Herrera Scott". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Laura Herrera Scott, MD, MPH
Secretary