

**TO:** The Honorable Joseline Peña-Melynk, Chair  
*House Health & Government Operations Committee*

**HB728**  
**Letter of Information**

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**FROM:** Annie Coble  
*Assistant Director, Maryland Government Affairs*

**DATE:** February 12, 2025

**RE:** HB728 OPIOID RESTITUTION FUND – AUTHORIZED USES

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Johns Hopkins would like to provide information on HB728 Opioid Restitution Fund – Authorized Uses. This bill expands the allowable uses for the Opioid Restitution Fund to include the operational costs of the Opioid Enforcement Unit of the Attorney General Office. This Unit is responsible for collecting funds from lawsuits and master settlement agreements associated with the opioid epidemic.

Maryland’s Opioid Restitution Fund was established in 2019 with the goal of using funds to help support, treat and prevent opioid addiction for all Marylanders. Johns Hopkins has been a partner in Maryland’s fight against the opioid epidemic and appreciates all the work that has been put into reducing overdose rates. In fact, on February 4, 2025, it was reported that Maryland’s overdose rates decreased 28% in calendar year 2023<sup>1</sup>.

Johns Hopkins would like to direct the Committee’s attention to *The Principles for the Use of Funds from the Opioid Litigation* (linked [here](#)) created by the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. The Principles were developed by a coalition of organizations across the spectrum of the substance use field including physicians, addiction medicine specialists, recovery, treatment, and harm reduction. The five principles that were developed are: 1. Spend the money to save lives; 2. Use evidence to guide spending; 3. Invest in youth prevention. 4. Focus on racial equity and 5. Develop a fair and transparent process for deciding where to spend the funding. These principles are an important tool to ensure proper spending and allocation of litigation funds.

Johns Hopkins would encourage the Committee to consider these principles when making any changes to the allowable uses of the Opioid Restitution Fund.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cbsnews.com/baltimore/news/opioid-fatal-overdose-decline-maryland/>