



March 13, 2025

**Senate Bill 140 | House Bill 690 - Overdose Awareness Day**

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

House Health & Government Operations Committee

**POSITION: Support**

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

On behalf of Evolve Life Centers, we write to support Senate Bill 140 | House Bill 690, which would require the Governor to annually proclaim August 31 as Overdose Awareness Day.

Evolve Life Centers offers a variety of services that include Residential Treatment, Intensive Outpatient, Outpatient, Mental Health Services, Primary Care, Recovery Housing, Transportation, Evolve Kids Care.

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

Our organization takes all of our clients and staff each August 31st skydiving for Overdose Awareness Day allowing individuals to pay homage to those they lost while simultaneously jumping into their own new life.. 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.

In 2024, Maryland experienced a significant 38% reduction in fatal overdoses, with 1,553 deaths compared to 2,511 in 2023<sup>1</sup>. This decline is largely attributed to the state's comprehensive approach to substance use treatment, which offers various levels of care tailored to meet individuals' specific needs. In Anne Arundel County, programs like the Department of Health's Overdose Response Training provide community members with education on recognizing and responding to overdoses, including the administration of naloxone—a life-saving medication that can quickly restore breathing during an opioid overdose. Additionally, community initiatives and

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<https://governor.maryland.gov/news/press/pages/governor-moore-announces-dramatic-decrease-in-fatal-overdoses-in-maryland-in-2024.aspx>



funding opportunities which collaborate with local agencies to develop strategies aimed at reducing overdoses in their communities. These targeted efforts have been instrumental in addressing the opioid crisis and reducing overdose fatalities across the state.

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. Together we can, reduce stigma around substance use disorders, and remember those we've lost to overdoses.

Senate Bill 140 | House Bill 690 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.

It is for these reasons, we urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 140 | House Bill 690, affirming Maryland's commitment to preventing drug overdoses and honoring the lives affected by this ongoing epidemic. Thank you for considering our testimony.

Sincerely,

Christopher Pedersen, C.O.O.

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