



**House Health & Government Operations Committee
February 19, 2025**

**House Bill 798 - Opioid Restitution Fund – Interactive Dashboard
Support**

On behalf of the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence - Maryland (NCADD-MD), we strongly support House Bill 798, 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. House Bill 798 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.

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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 House Bill 798**. 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.