



Board of Directors 2023 - 2025

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House Health & Government Operations Committee House Bill 256 - Health Occupations Boards - Sunset Extensions January 30, 2025 Support with Amendment

The Maryland Association for the Treatment of Opioid Dependence (MATOD) is a provider and advocacy organization comprised of over 60 healthcare organizations from across the State. Our mission is the promotion of best-practice, high-quality and effective Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) for opioid use disorder (OUD). Our vision is that all Maryland citizens with OUD can receive desired MAT regardless of their residence.

MATOD's members have had ongoing problems with the Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists for several years. Facing a severe workforce shortage in the field of substance use disorder treatment, the health occupation board that certifies and licenses alcohol and drug counselors can play a crucial role in helping treatment programs meet their patients' needs and legal staffing requirements by conducting their work in a timely manner. But this is not the case.

MATOD members regularly report counselors waiting six or more months for decisions on their applications. Staff is non-responsive when applicants and employers call for status updates. There is a lack of consistency in the renewal process, and non-compliance with regulations regarding education requirements that apply to counselors. There have also been recent changes in the interpretation of criminal history reviews, preventing many individuals with SUD-related criminal histories from working.

The Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists is so understaffed, that some Board members step into staffing roles to assist with the work. There was an Alcohol and Drug Subcommittee of the Board created in 2022 to review and make recommendation on regulations governing alcohol and drug counselors, a task long overdue. This Subcommittee has failed to meet to finalize their recommendations.

Of greatest concern is the fact that the Board has had six executive directors in the last seven years. There is clearly a level of dysfunction taking place that requires much greater scrutiny. We ask that the Committee put no more than a two-year sunset on the Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists and request a formal review.

MATOD members include community and hospital based Opioid Treatment Programs, local Health Departments, local Addiction and Behavioral Health Authorities and Maryland organizations that support evidence-based Medication Assisted Treatment. MATOD members include thousands of highly trained and dedicated addiction counselors, clinical social workers, physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, nurses, peer recovery specialists and dedicated staff who work every day to save and transform lives.