

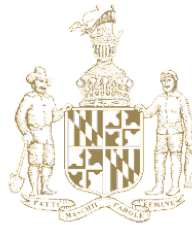
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
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Thank you, Chair Joseline A. Peña-Melnyk, and committee members. It is an honor to be before this esteemed body once again. I am here to ask for your favorable report on HB396 – Establishment of a Detoxification Fund for Uninsured or Underinsured Youth.

While the original bill seeks to establish a \$1.5 million annual fund within Prince George's County to cover detoxification services for uninsured and underinsured youth under 21, per my conversation with leadership this bill will need to be converted to a statewide bill. However, this will require a larger allocation from the Maryland Opioid Restitution Fund which is calculated at this time. This fund would provide young people struggling with substance use the opportunity to receive up to 90 days of detox care—an essential step for effective stabilization and long-term recovery.

For many young people without insurance or adequate coverage, access to detox services remains out of reach. Currently, youth facing addiction often fall through the cracks, especially those who are uninsured, homeless, or lack stable family support. These young people have limited resources, and without access to proper care, they are at a significantly higher risk of continued addiction, relapse, and even entry into the juvenile justice system. By creating this dedicated fund, we provide a bridge to stability and offer these youth a path to recovery.

Detox services of up to 90 days allow for comprehensive care, addressing not only the immediate effects of withdrawal but also setting the foundation for lasting change. Studies show that longer detox stays dramatically reduce relapse rates, increasing the likelihood that young people can successfully transition into further treatment or back to school and family life.

This bill is also an efficient and impactful use of funds. By leveraging existing resources like the opioid settlement fund, we can increase access to life-saving services for our youth while promoting fiscal responsibility. Such funding would not only support our youth but would also reduce the broader economic and social costs associated with untreated youth addiction.

In closing, I urge this esteemed committee to recognize the importance of HB396 and the positive impact it will have on our community. Let us provide these young people with the chance they deserve for recovery and a brighter future. Thank you for considering this measure, which prioritizes the health, safety, and potential of our county's youth.

I ask for your favorable support of HB396.