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Judicial Proceedings Committee
Executive Nominations Committee

Joint Committees

Administrative, Executive, and
Legislative Review
Children, Youth, and Families
Senate Chair, Legislative Ethics

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony for Senate Bill 942
Correctional Services - Medication-Assisted Treatment Funding
Before the Judicial Proceedings Committee
February 19, 2025

Good afternoon, Chair Smith and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

Some committee members may recall in 2019, I co-sponsored House Bill 116 with my colleagues then-Delegate Barron and Chairwoman Pena-Melnyk and Senator West cross-filed SB846. We passed that legislation¹ and the law required medication-assisted treatment be provided in all local detention centers to incarcerated individuals found to be suffering from an opioid use disorder.

When it comes to funding for opioid remediation there has historically been a handful of options through different federal and state agencies that offer grants, and that was in addition to opioid settlement dollars in the Opioid Restitution Fund. In trying to be budget conscious and use a good deal of money that was available to pay for these programs, at the time, we devised a three-agency process to filter grants to the locals to pay for these programs.

Counties, the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy ("GOCPP"), the Maryland Office of Overdose Response ("MOOR"), and the Attorney General's office have found that the current process needs some minor changes to ensure these funds are more effectively getting to the local facilities to pay for these programs. Some counties have annual costs for these programs that cannot be sufficiently met by one grant. In fact, some counties must apply for three grants, which brings with it three different sets of restrictions and reporting requirements. Unfortunately, if the counties are unsuccessful, they are left to cover those gaps with their own local funds, which was not the intention. Additionally, not knowing whether you will get the funding from a competitive grant process makes it very difficult to financially plan for a requirement like this every year.

Senate Bill 942 ("SB 942") is intended to simplify the process substantially and ensure that local detention centers will be able to recover the full cost of their programs. MOOR, GOCPP, and the locals have figured out a way to do this. SB 942 requires a county to send the full year estimate of its costs for the upcoming year. This will function as a universal application for funding. MOOR will then coordinate the braiding of funding on the state side. Any funding that cannot be covered

¹The legislation was signed into law as Chapter 532 of 2019.

by an eligible grant would be covered by supplemental funds from the state's discretionary portion of the Opioid Restitution Fund.

Additionally, during drafting some language was inadvertently left out and, in some instances, some text was inadvertently removed; therefore you will receive amendments which:

- ensure required medications intended to will not change;
- lists the Special Secretary of MOOR as the agency responsible for allocating the funding;
- specifies “a grant” will change to “funds” except in one instance to ensure grants are still required to be used where they can; and
- will add a requirement that a county shall send the forecasted costs for the coming fiscal year to MOOR.

In conclusion, we have had six years to assess what the actual challenges are in providing incarcerated individuals medication-assisted treatment in our local detention centers and we now have clarity on how this can be done better. SB 942, with its originally intended language, will do just that without putting any pressure on the state budget. This has been confirmed by GOCCP and MOOR, that they can implement SB 942 within existing means, so there is no fiscal note. For the aforementioned reasons, I ask this committee for favorable report on SB 942.