



Maryland Alliance for Sensible Drug Policy

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April 1, 2026

The Honorable Heather Bagnall, Chair
House Health Committee
Maryland House of Delegates
Annapolis, Maryland

RE: SB876 – Recovery Residences – Certification – Requirement – FAVORABLE

Dear Chair Bagnall, Vice Chair Cullison, and Members of the Committee:

I'm submitting this testimony in **strong support of SB876** on behalf of the Maryland Alliance for Sensible Drug Policy, a state-wide advocacy group led by people with lived or living experience with substance use.

Recovery houses provide a vital link between an individual's treatment and achieving long-term stability. At the same time, residents are uniquely vulnerable, especially when a home is poorly run or predatory. In our testimony regarding *HB878* (recovery residence inspection), we provided the following specific examples of the harms we have witnessed in recovery housing and why oversight matters:

- **Arbitrary discharge:** We've seen residents discharged for reasons unrelated to safety or recovery. In one instance, a person was kicked out at 9:00 p.m. on a Sunday night simply because other residents thought he was a "jerk," which is not an appropriate reason for making someone homeless.
- **Theft:** We've seen discharges handled in ways that strip people of basic dignity and property, including being given 15 minutes and a trash bag to pack, followed by other residents picking through what was left behind despite policies requiring the house to store their remaining belongings safely for 30 days.
- **Unsafe discharges:** We've seen residents who experienced a brief return to use told to leave immediately, sometimes in the middle of the night, with no referrals (to a higher level of care, another recovery residence, or even shelter), leaving them suddenly homeless at a moment of heightened overdose risk.

- **Discrimination and harassment:** We've seen discriminatory and abusive behavior, including house managers using racist and homophobic slurs and bragging that they had run off every black or gay resident who had been placed in their house.

This bill addresses a related problem: **right now, certification in Maryland is voluntary**, which means residents and families have no reliable way to know whether a home meets basic standards before moving in.

This bill, as amended, requires that by June 1, 2027, a recovery house must be certified by a credentialing agency that has been approved by the Department of Health, prior to operating within the state of Maryland. Other states already require licensure or certification to operate recovery housing,ⁱ because this kind of clarity is important:

- **Safeguards the welfare of residents** by establishing minimum expectations for the for safety, transparency, and accountability.
- **Aids families and referring agencies** (e.g., treatment providers, re-entry, peers) in making informed decisions about placements.
- **Strengthens legitimate recovery houses** by eliminating the "race to the bottom" in which high-quality service providers compete with unregulated or irresponsible operators.

SB876 ensures that all recovery houses are subject to the same level of accountability, instead of leaving a voluntary loophole where the riskiest homes can simply avoid certification altogether.

Request

For these reasons, we respectfully ask the committee to issue a **favorable report on SB876**.

Respectfully submitted,

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ⁱ Arizona Revised Statutes § 36-2062. Licensure required; standards. Arizona State Legislature. <https://www.azleg.gov/ars/36/02062.htm>; Kentucky Revised Statutes § 222.502. Certification required for residences promoting recovery from substance use disorder. Kentucky Legislature. <https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/law/Statutes/statute.aspx?id=55089>; Utah Code § 26B-2-117. Licensing residential treatment programs and recovery residences. Utah Legislature. <https://le.utah.gov/xcode/Title26B/Chapter2/26B-2-S117.html>.