

March 9, 2026

The Honorable Heather Bagnall
Chair, House Health Committee
240 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401



RE: SUPPORT of House Bill 1249

Certified Recovery Residences - Refusing Services to Individuals Receiving Medication-Assisted Treatment - Prohibition - FAVORABLE

Dear Chair Bagnall, Vice Chair Cullison, and House Health Committee Members,

The Baltimore Harm Reduction Coalition (BHRC) writes to express our **strong support** of **House Bill 1249 - Certified Recovery Residences - Refusing Services to Individuals Receiving Medication-Assisted Treatment - Prohibition**. Certified recovery residences play a key role in Maryland's behavioral healthcare system, providing community-based recovery support during an especially vulnerable period. However, some recovery houses still refuse to accept residents who receive medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD). This discrimination persists despite decades of evidence showing that MOUD is the most effective treatment for opioid use disorder.¹ When people are forced to choose between supportive housing and life-saving medication, the consequences can be deadly.

BHRC is an overdose response program and an authorized syringe service program. In partnership with local churches, we conduct daily street outreach to ensure that people who use drugs have access to critical survival supplies and connections to stabilizing services. Our participants take meaningful steps every day to improve their lives, including starting medications for opioid use disorder and seeking recovery housing to support their self-determined goals. These choices should reinforce one another, not create new barriers. Yet stigma against MOUD remains widespread, often based on the false belief that treatment is simply "trading one drug for another." In reality, more than 50 years of research shows that medications such as buprenorphine and methadone reduce cravings and withdrawal symptoms, cut the risk of overdose death in half, and help people remain in treatment longer.¹

While Maryland has seen recent declines in overdose deaths, nearly 1,300 Marylanders still died from overdose in 2025.² Every one of those deaths represents a preventable and devastating loss. Maryland families deserve access to every evidence-based tool available to save lives. House Bill 1249 establishes a clear and necessary standard to ensure that individuals receiving prescribed medications for opioid use disorder are not denied access to certified recovery housing. For these reasons and more, BHRC respectfully urges a favorable report on House Bill 1249.

For more information about this position, please contact Darci Curwen-Garber, BHRC Policy Manager, at darci@baltimoreharmreduction.org.

Sincerely,

The Baltimore Harm Reduction Coalition (BHRC)

1. Drug Policy Alliance. *Medications for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD) Factsheet*. 2025. https://drugpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/DPA-MOUDFactsheet_InDesign-FINAL-3.pdf
2. Maryland Department of Health, *MDH Interactive Dashboards*, <https://health.maryland.gov/dataoffice/Pages/mdh-dashboards.aspx>