



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB 1477: Public Health – Veterans Mental Health Innovations Act

Testimony of Delegate Darrell Odom

March 10, 2026

Chair Bagnall, Vice Chair Cullison, and Members of the Health Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of **House Bill 1477, the Veterans Mental Health Innovations Act**.

HB 1477 allows Maryland's research institutions to participate in cutting-edge research into **ibogaine**, a promising therapy being studied for the treatment of traumatic brain injury, opioid use disorder, and other neurological conditions.

Ibogaine is a naturally occurring compound derived from the *Tabernanthe iboga* plant that has attracted growing attention among neuroscientists for its remarkable effects on the human brain. Research suggests that ibogaine may help restore neurological function and repair damage associated with traumatic brain injury and addiction.

Recent research conducted by scientists at Stanford Medicine followed special operations veterans who traveled abroad to receive ibogaine treatment. The results were striking. Participants experienced dramatic reductions in symptoms associated with traumatic brain injury, including major improvements in PTSD, depression, and anxiety.

Ibogaine has also shown promise in the treatment of opioid use disorder. Studies have shown that patients receiving ibogaine treatment often experience rapid resolution of opioid withdrawal symptoms and significant reductions in drug-seeking behavior.

While these results are encouraging, most research to date has taken place outside the United States because ibogaine is currently classified as a Schedule I substance. However, federal law allows clinical trials involving Schedule I substances under FDA supervision. HB 1477 would allow Maryland to participate in those federally regulated trials and contribute to the scientific evaluation of this therapy.

The bill establishes a **grant program administered by the Maryland Department of Health** to support FDA-approved clinical trials conducted by qualified Maryland research institutions. It also allows those institutions to collaborate with a multi-state research consortium working to advance ibogaine through the FDA approval process.

Importantly, the bill contains strong safeguards. Grant recipients must provide matching funds, follow FDA-approved protocols, and submit regular progress and financial reports to the State.

Funding for the program would come from the **Opioid Restitution Fund**, using settlement dollars recovered from opioid manufacturers to support research aimed at addressing the devastating impacts of opioid addiction.

For veterans living with traumatic brain injuries and for individuals struggling with opioid addiction, the promise of new treatment options cannot come soon enough. HB 1477 positions Maryland to contribute to the rigorous research necessary to determine whether ibogaine can become a safe and effective therapy.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to issue a **favorable report on HB 1477**.

Thank you for your consideration.