

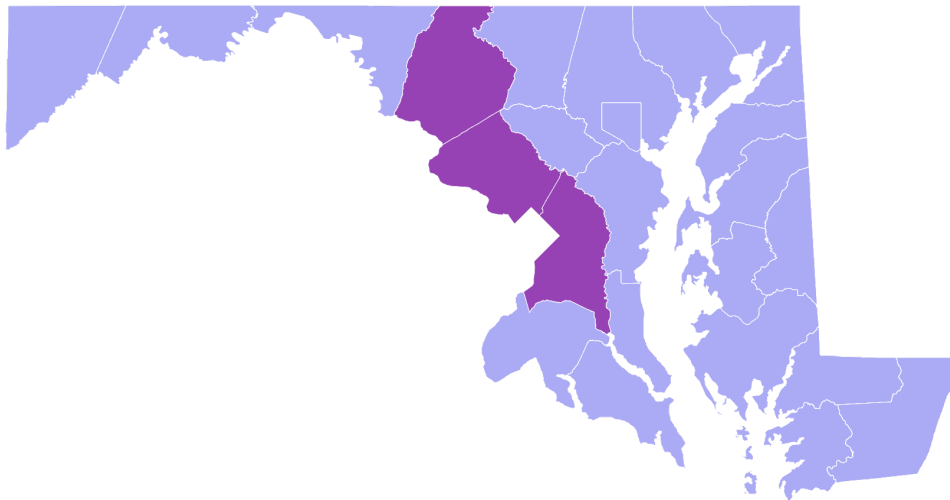


Maryland's Office of  
Overdose Response

# Community Overdose Action

Town Hall Series

## Regional Event Summary Capital Region



### **Frederick County**

*Thursday, October 26, 2023*

Frederick Community College

### **Prince George's County**

*Wednesday, November 8, 2023*

Prince George's County Memorial  
Library System – Hyattsville

### **Montgomery County**

*Thursday, November 2, 2023*

County Council Office Building

## Overview

In September 2023, Maryland's Office of Overdose Response launched our Community Overdose Action Town Hall Series, through which we are visiting each of Maryland's 24 local jurisdictions to hear community feedback about how Maryland can do more to address the overdose crisis. Through these events, we received a tremendous amount of feedback from Marylanders about how overdose has affected their lives and their communities. We also heard their ideas for how state and local leaders can do more to expand access to care and save lives.

We would like to thank everyone who participated in our town hall series. Public input will be a key consideration for informing Maryland's strategic policy priorities for addressing overdose morbidity and mortality throughout the state. Each community has its own specific needs, and it is important that these needs be considered in the formulation of state and local-level policy.

## Capital Region Events

**Frederick County (Thursday, October 26, 2023):** Our first town hall in the Capital Region was held at Frederick Community College in Frederick, MD. Guest speakers included Frederick County Executive Jessica Fitzwater and Dr. Barbara Brookmyer, Frederick County Health Officer.

Video Recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xalkFrmcliw>

**Montgomery County (Thursday, November 2, 2023):** The second stop of our Capital Region town halls was at the Montgomery County Council Office Building. Here, we were joined by Dr. Kisha Davis, Montgomery County Health Officer.

Video Recording: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=23Tv6dWs\\_9M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=23Tv6dWs_9M)

**Prince George's County (Wednesday, November 8, 2023):** Our third town hall in the Capital Region was held in Prince George's County at the Hyattsville Branch Library of the Prince George's County Memorial Library System. Guest speakers included Dr. Matthew Levy, Prince George's County Director of Homeland Security Ronald Gill, and Delegate Deni Taveras, representing District 47B.

Video Recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VDV0hsF0FqI>

## Community Feedback

Individuals who have participated in our town hall series across the state have addressed many common themes as well as county-specific challenges to addressing the overdose crisis. Individuals who shared their stories and their feedback included people in recovery, family members of individuals who use drugs, family members who have lost loved ones to overdose, representatives of community organizations, local government representatives, individuals experiencing homelessness, members of faith-based communities, representatives of treatment and recovery providers, students, and others. The input we received during our Capital Region town halls is summarized below.

**Note:** The views summarized here are those of the individuals who participated in our town hall series. They do not necessarily reflect the views of the Maryland Department of Health or the Moore-Miller administration. Feedback has been anonymized and summarized for concision while preserving the intent of the speakers to the greatest extent possible. Feedback regarding similar themes has been combined where appropriate.

- Students should be allowed to carry naloxone in schools, naloxone should be more widely distributed in educational settings, and students should receive extensive overdose response training.
- Maryland needs more youth-focused substance use resources, such as treatment and recovery programs that are specifically targeted at young people.
- More investment in evidence-based youth prevention efforts is needed to help educate young people at home and in educational settings about the dangers of substance use.
- More education is needed for parents regarding the issues that young people are facing, such as counterfeit medications made with fentanyl.
- Parents need to be active participants in prevention efforts.
- More support services are needed for families that are supporting children with substance use disorders or have lost a child to an overdose.
- Maryland should provide greater support for community-based prevention campaigns.
- Policymakers should include young people in developing prevention campaigns to ensure messaging resonates with young people.
- More is needed to address stigma, especially in underserved communities.
- Maryland should implement involuntary treatment options for people under the age of 18 with substance use disorders.
- Technologies, such as heart rate monitors, can help alert loved ones in the case of an overdose.
- Leaders should evaluate policies that do not punish individuals for using drugs, such as decriminalization and supervised consumption sites. The illicit drug market is the problem, not people who use drugs.
- More efforts to support chronic pain patients who use prescription opioids can help reduce the number of people who seek out illicit opioids.
- Individuals receiving prescription opioids for pain management should not be penalized for using cannabis.
- Leaders need to engage experts from a variety of fields, such as medicine, the insurance industry, academia, etc., to help inform policy.
- More action is needed to prevent fentanyl use among young people.

- State and local leaders need to communicate more often and increase collaborative efforts to address overdose mortality.
- Recovery residences should be equipped with naloxone.
- More is needed to destigmatize substance use disorder and to help the general public understand that substance use disorder is a medical condition that may not be able to be addressed by willpower alone.
- More awareness is needed for the National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, 988.
- More bilingual substance use resources are needed to provide support to Spanish-speaking communities and other minority groups.
- More awareness efforts are needed to educate people about Maryland's Good Samaritan Law.
- Harm reduction efforts and recovery support are making a difference in the lives of the residents of Frederick County.
- Maryland needs to increase the geographic reach of its recovery programs.
- Prevention efforts need to address generational adverse childhood experiences.
- More funding is needed for transitional housing for people who use drugs and their families.
- More treatment and recovery services are needed for individuals with hearing disabilities.
- Maryland needs to do more to make substance use treatment and recovery programs more accessible for LGBTQ individuals, who are more likely to develop substance use disorders. Stigma is a significant barrier to accessing care for LGBTQ individuals.
- Individuals on Medicare need more long-term treatment and recovery options. Maryland also needs more organizations that accept Medicare for substance use services, including youth treatment services.
- More support is needed for individuals without insurance to access treatment and recovery services.