Maryland's Office of Overdose Response

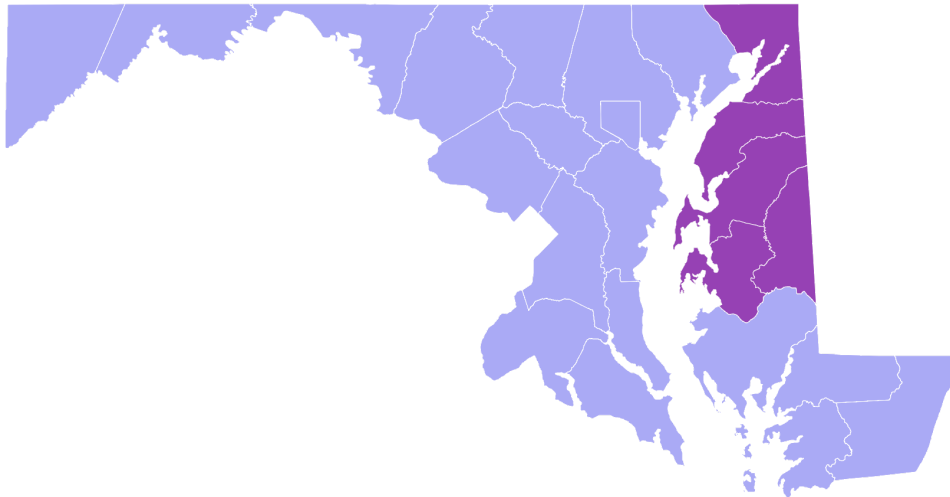**Maryland**
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Community Overdose Action
Town Hall Series

Regional Event Summary
Upper & Mid Eastern Shore

Cecil County
Tuesday, August 1, 2023
Cecil County Government Building

Queen Anne's County
Thursday, September 21, 2023
Kent Island High School

Kent County
Tuesday, October 24, 2023
Kent County Commissioners Office

Caroline County
Tuesday, November 14, 2023
Wharves of Choptank
Visitor and Heritage Center

Talbot County
Thursday, November 16, 2023
Talbot County Free Library

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.

Upper and Mid Eastern Shore Events

Cecil County (Tuesday, August 1, 2023): This event was held in the Cecil County Government Building in Elkton, Maryland. Here, we were joined by Cecil County Executive Danielle Hornberger, Lauren Levy, Cecil County Health Officer, David Trolio, Director of Community Services with the Cecil County Department of Community Services, and Aaron Wright, representing Voices of Hope.

Video Recording https://www.cecil.tv/videosii/opioid-summit-2023/

Queen Anne's County (Thursday, September 21, 2023): Our town hall for Queen Anne's County was held at Kent Island High School in Stevensville, Maryland. Guest speakers included Dr. Joseph Ciotola, Queen Anne's County Health Officer, Queen Anne's County Sheriff Gary Hofmann, State's Attorney for Queen Anne's County Lance Richardson, Queen Anne's County Circuit Court Judge C. Lynn Knight, and Jim Moran, Queen Anne's County Commissioner.

Kent County (Thursday, October 24, 2023): The next town hall held in the Upper and Mid Eastern Shore region was in Kent County at the Kent County Commissioners Office in Chestertown, Maryland. Here, we were joined by Bill Webb, Kent County Health Officer, and Katie Dilley, executive director of Mid Shore Behavioral Health.

Caroline County (Thursday, November 14, 2023): The event was held at the Wharves of Choptank Visitor and Heritage Center in Denton, Maryland. Here, we were joined by Caroline County Health Officer Robin Cahall.

Talbot County (Thursday, November 16, 2023): Our town hall for Talbot County was held at the Talbot County Free Library in Easton, Maryland. Guest speakers for this event included Dr. Maria Maguire, Talbot County Health Officer, and Talbot County Sheriff Joseph Gamble.

Community Feedback

Individuals who shared their feedback throughout our town hall series 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 Upper and Mid Eastern Shore events 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.

- Collaboration between state, local, and community partners is critical for building and maintaining a safety net of resources for people who use drugs.

- 10% for all state block grants addressing the overdose crisis and funds from Maryland's Opioid Restitution Fund be allocated for community-based organizations for capacity building and sustainability.

- Peer recovery services are vital for helping connect people who use drugs to care.

- Maryland should invest more in creating meaningful employment opportunities for individuals in recovery.

- Maryland should invest more in recovery services to include using funds from the Opioid Restitution Fund. Community-based recovery organizations need a higher degree of access to funding.

- Maryland should invest more in recovery housing for individuals exiting treatment and for individuals leaving incarceration. Marylanders need greater access to recovery housing in general.

- Government regulations and red tape make it very difficult to establish recovery residences.

- Maryland should restart the work of the Trauma-Informed Care Commission. More attention is needed to address trauma, which evidence shows is strongly linked to substance use.

- Maryland needs greater wound care capacity, especially among treatment providers, to ensure that individuals with soft tissue injuries can access treatment services.

- Treatment centers in Maryland need to improve the quality of care for outpatient services as opposed to relying solely on telemedicine. Marylanders need greater access to intensive outpatient services.

- Maryland needs greater capacity to provide mental health services and services for co-occurring mental and behavioral health conditions.

- More is needed to address stigma surrounding substance use, especially in hospital settings and carceral settings.

- Shame and stigma surrounding substance use among young people can prevent them from seeking help.

- Many people who use drugs also experience homelessness. Maryland cannot address the overdose crisis without also addressing housing shortages and housing affordability. Maryland also needs greater legal protections for renters and tenants.

- People who use drugs are less likely to utilize safe stations located at police departments.

- Marylanders need greater ease of access to food assistance.

- Mental health and crisis services need faster response times to connect individuals to care.

- Maryland needs to increase access to treatment and recovery services, especially in rural areas.

- Maryland needs treatment and recovery services for women and women with young children.

- A lack of transportation options inhibits access to care, especially in rural areas.

- Specific to Queen Anne's County, more resources are needed near the Grasonville Community Center. Government agencies and community partners can collaborate to increase services in the area.

- Prevention programming helps deter future substance use.

- More guidance is needed for prescribers when treating individuals with medications for opioid use disorder. Individuals receiving medications for opioid use disorder may divert medications or become too dependent on them.

- Maryland needs to provide more funding to support the expansion of substance use services in detention facilities, which is mandated by Maryland law.

- Marylanders need greater access to care coordination and navigation services for substance use care.

- More resources are needed to reach individuals who are denied recovery housing services due to using substances.

- Maryland should increase funding for recovery services to reimburse for longer stays.

- Greater education is needed for the general public for recognizing overdoses, responding to overdoses, and administering naloxone.