OPIOID RESTITUTION FUND

ADVISORY COUNCIL

November 1, 2025

The Honorable Wes Moore
Governor, State of Maryland
100 State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401–1991

The Honorable Aruna Miller
Lt. Governor, State of Maryland
100 State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401–1991

RE: Health General Article § 7.5-905 — Opioid Restitution Fund Advisory Council — Annual Recommendations (MSAR # 14404)

Dear Governor Moore and Lt. Governor Miller:

Pursuant to Health General Article § 7.5-905 and in accordance with § 2–1257 of the State Government Article, Maryland's Office of Overdose Response submits the attached recommendations on behalf of the Opioid Restitution Fund (ORF) Advisory Council for utilizing proceeds from prescription opioid-related legal settlements contained in Maryland's Opioid Restitution Fund. Specifically, Health General Article § 7.5-905 requires the ORF Advisory Council to provide recommendations to the Governor by November 1 of each year. The recommendations should consider the following criteria:

1. The number of people per capita with a substance use disorder in a jurisdiction;
2. Disparities in access to care in a jurisdiction that may preclude persons;
3. The number of overdose deaths per capita in a jurisdiction;
4. The programs, services, supports, or other resources currently available to individuals with substance use disorders in a jurisdiction; and
5. Disparities in access to care and health outcomes in a jurisdiction.

As required, five physical copies of this report will be delivered to the Department of Legislative Services library. Please contact me at emily.keller@maryland.gov with any questions.

Sincerely,

Emily Keller
Special Secretary of Overdose Response

Enclosure

CC: Sarah Case Herron, MDH Director of Governmental Affairs
Sarah Albert, Department of Legislative Services, 5 copies (MSAR # 14404)

OPIOID RESTITUTION FUND
ADVISORY COUNCIL

2025 Recommendations

Background

Maryland's Opioid Restitution Fund (ORF) was created in 2019 to receive all funds awarded to the State of Maryland through legal settlements with prescription opioid manufacturers and distributors. In 2022, Maryland established the ORF Advisory Council (ORFAC) to provide annual recommendations regarding the use of the settlement funds. These recommendations are specifically for the state share of the settlement, which is 30% of the funds that Maryland will receive.

ORF Advisory Council Members

- Delegate Samuel Rosenberg
- Senator Dawn Gile
- Special Secretary of Overdose Response Emily Keller, Maryland's Office of Overdose Response
- Ryan Moran, Maryland Department of Health, Medicaid Administration
- Alyssa Lord, Maryland Department of Health, Behavioral Health Administration
- Lauren Levy, Maryland Association of Counties
- Dr. David Myles, Maryland Municipal League
- Appointed by the Governor: Howard Ashkin, Meghan Westwood, and Marcus Webster
- Appointed by the Secretary of Health: Carlos Hardy, Patricia Smith, and Pete Fitzpatrick

2025 Recommendations

Transportation

- Increase support for transportation to treatment services, including Opioid Treatment Programs.
- Consider models, such as the Compass Model in Cecil County, which includes transportation to employment opportunities, healthcare appointments, support meetings, education, wraparound services, etc.

Develop Substance Use Workforce

- Increase support for educational opportunities and tuition coverage for those entering the behavioral health workforce.
- Improve efficiency for licensing and credentialing approval and peer support training.
- Consider partnerships with the Governor's Service-Learning program.
- Explore supporting certified peer recovery specialist tracks within higher education institutions.

Treatment in Correctional Settings

- Continue to fund and support efforts that expand access to evidence-based treatment in correctional settings, including treatment with medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD), substance use disorder screening services (such as SBIRT), counseling services, and peer support.
- Support re-entry planning that includes pre-release service coordination.
- Support transportation from correctional facilities upon release.
- Support the advancement of services in pre-trial settings.
- Work with local governments to include the cost of treatment in facilities in their healthcare contracts.

Treatment for Youth

- Support treatment for youth with opioid use disorder (OUD), or for youth impacted by family OUD. This should specifically address MOUD, SBIRT, and residential treatment for youth.
- Consider youth clubhouse and peer support in school models, such as the ROOTS project.

Importance of Harm Reduction

- The federal government has published guidance that has caused concerns for the availability and sustainability of harm reduction services. The council recommends that this issue be closely watched and ORF funds be considered if major access gaps are identified. Educational outreach may be needed at the local level about these services in order to fill gaps.
- Consider funding Overdose Prevention/Safe Consumption Pilot sites.

Housing during or after Substance Use Treatment

- Support increased access to quality and certified recovery housing and long-term housing options beyond recovery housing, to include supportive housing options.
- Ensure housing options support multiple pathways to recovery.

Evidence-Based and Upstream Prevention

- Encourage prevention programming that is evidence-based and not fear-focused, such as but not limited to Botvin Life Skills, Project Alert, and the Hope Model.
- Support programs that are trauma-informed, address ACEs, and build resiliency.

- Include youth voices in the development of programming.
- Family support, to include grief counseling.

Public Messaging

- Support stigma-reduction efforts, recovery-focused messaging, naloxone access, the Rapid Analysis of Drugs program and drug supply information, opioid remediation, and education on harm reduction.

Process Recommendations

- More clear communication about the ORF with the public, to include opioid remediation.
- Provide technical assistance to local governments receiving ORF funds and to encourage cross-subdivision collaboration.
- Provide technical assistance to community based organizations that are interested in accessing ORF funds.
- Include those impacted in decision-making on programs.