



MARYLAND OVERDOSE RESPONSE  
**ADVISORY COUNCIL**

**Citizen Advisory Workgroup**  
**Meeting Notes**

*Tuesday, January 27, 2026*  
*1-2:30 pm*

**Welcome and Moment of Silence**

**Review of January 13th Meeting Notes**

No additions or corrections - approved to post to the website.

**Attendance**

Thomas Higdon, Barbara Allen, LaTonia, Alva Moses, Christina Kendall, Debbie Santini, Edwin Gibbs, Malik Burnett, Jessie Dunleavy, Joe Rogers, Johanna Dolan, Megan Murnane, Melanie Watts, Nicole Burrow, Tammy Collins, Yngvild Olsen

**Member introductions**

Each member shared information about why they decided to join the group. Some common themes in members' motivations for joining the workgroup:

- quality evidenced based treatment access challenges (stigma being a big factor)
- system failures
- harms caused by policy and the criminal legal system
- concerns about changes in federal funding and priorities

- concerns about provider quality/enforcement
- addressing fraud/waste/abuse

## **Overview of the Maryland Overdose Response Advisory Council (MORAC)**

- The MORAC was established in 2023 through the same executive order that created MOOR with the purpose of enhancing coordination around overdose response at the agency leadership level.
- The council is chaired by the Lt. Governor and staff by MOOR.
- Membership consists of 18 state agencies. Agencies that are focused on health, human services, labor, housing, education, public safety, disabilities, aging, veterans, courts
- The council meets at least quarterly and the majority of the meetings are in-person in Annapolis.
- The duties of the council are to share data across agencies and identify challenges and barriers related to the provision of substance use related services in Maryland.
- By November 1st the MORAC is required to submit a report to the Governor outlining the challenges and their recommendations for addressing them.
- Public engagement is a top priority for the Lt. Governor, which is how this workgroup came to be. Last summer she directed MOOR to establish a citizen advisory workgroup that would provide formal input to the MORAC.
- The co-chairs will represent the workgroup in the MORAC meetings

## **Ground Rules Recommendations**

The workgroup discussed the ground rules recommended by the co-chairs based on the 1/13 meeting discussion. The ground rules below were adopted:

- Keep it simple.
- Co-Chairs will meet prior to each meeting to set agenda and priorities. Input from members is encouraged.
- Open each meeting with a moment of silence to ground members on our purpose.

- Meeting cadence: to meet the July 1 deadline meet every other week; perhaps adjust over time.
- Voting: 50% plus one of official group membership (e.g., if membership is 17, 9 votes pass the proposal). As group membership changes, adjust accordingly. Allow for email voting so that all members have the opportunity to express preferences.
- Public Input: When meeting virtually, input can be received via Chat, input offered during meetings (time allowing) is welcome. Anyone attending a meeting in person can submit information in writing, also.
- Attendance: anyone who misses three meetings in a row is considered unavailable to participate in the workgroup. At any time should someone determine their schedule isn't allowing for attendance or other changes preclude full participation please inform the co-chairs. MOOR will seek to determine a replacement when possible.
- Workgroup members should feel free to disagree, and will always treat one another with respect and compassion.

## Brainstorming

Members shared potential topics for future discussion, including:

- Improving continuity of care and care coordination
- Peer support
- Barriers to treatment and resources for undocumented individuals
- Racial disparities
- Voluntary vs. coerced treatment
- Funding - federal, state and opioid settlement.

## Action Items

- Members will share their priorities for discussion in the next meeting.
- Teresa will send a poll to members for establishing recurring meetings
- Co-chairs welcome feedback via email from members on the meeting flow and facilitation.