

MARYLAND OVERDOSE RESPONSE
ADVISORY COUNCIL

2025 Annual Report

Released: January, 2026

This report has been prepared on behalf of the Maryland Overdose Response Advisory Council pursuant to Executive Order 01.01.2023.21. Copies of this report have been delivered to the Office of the Governor of Maryland as well as the Maryland Department of Legislative Services Library pursuant to Maryland State Education Article § 23-301(e).

Letter from the Chair

As chair of the Maryland Overdose Response Advisory Council, I am honored to present the following report summarizing the council's progress in 2025.

While this past year has been a time of unprecedented challenges—with significant budget shortfalls at the state level and looming reductions in federal support for vital services—Maryland has made great strides in our efforts to reduce overdoses across the state. By the end of last year, fatal overdoses in Maryland decreased by nearly 37 percent from our historic high in 2021, falling from 2,800 to 1,767. This trend has continued in 2025, and it shows that our collective efforts to expand access to resources and care for individuals with substance use disorders are paying off.



This would not be possible without the tireless efforts of our state, local, and community-based partners who show up every day to meet people where they are and to support them at every step of their recovery journey. I extend my sincerest gratitude to all of our partners for all that you do.

Another area where Maryland has made progress is in the distribution of prescription opioid settlement funds. In March, Maryland's Office of Overdose Response (MOOR) announced \$12.4 million in competitive awards through the Opioid Restitution Fund, marking the first use of the state's 15-percent share of discretionary funds. Additionally, MOOR will be launching a settlement dashboard later this year to help share information about how settlement funds are being used in Maryland with the public.

The advisory council has also worked to increase our engagement with community members throughout this last year. In addition to providing space for members of the public to speak during our meetings, our members have organized important public events, such as Maryland's first-ever Substance Use Advocacy Awareness Day in April, where community members rallied to encourage policymakers to keep their attention on the overdose crisis. We also collaborated with the Governor's Office of Community Initiative to host our Faith in Community Forum in September, which brought community and faith-based organizations together to identify how we can collaborate to increase pathways to recovery.

Lastly, I'm proud to announce the creation of the advisory council's new Citizen Advisory Committee, which will include members of the public with lived experience. This group will work to provide regular recommendations to the council on how we can do more to meet the specific needs of communities across the state. This group will begin its work starting next year.

I want to thank the members of the advisory council for their invaluable contributions to our work over the past year and for their continued dedication to reducing overdoses in Maryland even further as we move forward.

Yours in service,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Aruna Miller".

Lt. Governor Aruna Miller

About the Maryland Overdose Response Advisory Council

The Maryland Overdose Response Advisory Council (MORAC) was established in December 2023, when Governor Wes Moore signed [Executive Order 01.01.2023.21](#). The Advisory Council is chaired by Lt. Governor Aruna Miller and includes representatives from 18 state agencies working to reduce overdose morbidity and mortality in Maryland. The advisory council shares data related to the overdose crisis across agencies and provides strategic guidance for increasing access to substance use care and addressing disparities in overdose outcomes.



Members of the Maryland Overdose Response Advisory Council include the following state agencies:

- Maryland's Office of Overdose Response (MOOR)
- Maryland Department of Health (MDH)
- Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS)
- Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)
- Maryland Department of Labor (DOL)
- Maryland Department of Commerce (DOC)
- Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE)
- Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS)
- Maryland Department of Juvenile Services (DJS)
- Maryland Department of Emergency Management (MDEM)
- Maryland Department of Veterans and Military Families (DVMF)
- Maryland Department of Aging (DOA)
- Maryland Department of Disabilities (DOD)
- Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth and Victim Services (GOCPP)
- Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems (MIEMSS)
- Office of the Public Defender (OPD)
- Maryland Judiciary
- Maryland State Police (MSP)

Advisory Council Membership



Emily Keller
Maryland's Office of Overdose Response



Anna Sierra
Department of Emergency Management



Alyssa Lord
Department of Health



Dana Burl
Maryland Department of Veterans and Military Families



Alecsandra Roe
Department of Human Services



Barbara Sigler
Department of Aging



Danielle Meister
Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development



Kirsten Bosak
Department of Disabilities



Casey Tiefenwerth
Department of Labor



Micah Ferguson
Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy



Jerel Registre
Department of Commerce



Ted Delbridge
Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems



Reginald Burke
Department of Education



Kirsten Downs
Office of the Public Defender



Michael Richards
Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services



Richard "Gray" Barton
Maryland Judiciary



Lt. Col. Rosemary Chappell
Maryland State Police



Jennifer Maehr
Department of Juvenile Services

Advisory Council Updates

Progress in 2025

The Maryland Overdose Response Advisory Council held four meetings in 2025, a summary of which can be found at StopOverdose.maryland.gov/MORAC. Throughout the year, the advisory council worked to advance several key priorities, including efforts to increase engagement with community members, assessing the state's progress toward addressing disparities in overdose, and working to implement its recommendations set forth in its previous [annual report](#).¹

Increasing Public Engagement

Input from the public is essential for informing the efforts of state agencies to reduce overdoses across Maryland. The Moore-Miller Administration wholeheartedly believes that those closest to the problem are closest to the solution. This is why the MORAC allows ample time for community members to share their stories and ideas for reducing and preventing overdoses during each of its meetings.



Community Events

Substance Use Awareness Advocacy Day: On April 2, 2025, the Lt. Governor's Office and Maryland's Office of Overdose Response hosted the inaugural Overdose Advocacy Day rally in Annapolis. Speakers included the Lt. Governor, Special Secretary Keller, and additional state officials from both sides of the aisle. Community organizations, advocates, treatment providers, family members, and others gathered in solidarity to continue our commitment to addressing substance use and overdose in Maryland.

¹ <http://StopOverdose.maryland.gov/MORAC>



Substance Use Awareness Advocacy Day, Annapolis (April 2, 2025)

Faith in Community: Opioid/Overdose Forum: On September 30, 2025, the Lt. Governor's Office, the Governor's Office of Community Initiatives (GOCI), and MOOR hosted the Faith in Community: Opioid/Overdose Forum in the Cherry Hill Neighborhood of Baltimore City. This event brought together community and faith-based organizations to share best practices for increasing pathways to substance use recovery.



Faith in Community: Opioid/Overdose Forum (September 30, 2025)

This inspiration for the forum stems from feedback that GOCI Director of Faith Outreach, Dr. Lora Hargrove, received in early 2025 from faith leaders in Baltimore City, many of whom expressed a desire to help respond to the overdose crisis but did not know where to begin. While planning this event, significant effort was made to hear from all voices that are doing the work at the community level. For example, Lt. Governor Miller, Special Secretary Keller, Dr. Hargrove, and their teams met and toured Helping Up Mission in Baltimore City prior to the event to better understand the challenges organizations like theirs face. Helping Up Mission is a treatment and recovery center with both a men's and women's location, focused on faith and community. Their Voices of Praise choir participated in the forum.

During the event, panelists discussed how faith and community partners can collaborate to address socioeconomic inequalities in overdose outcomes and access to care, expand outreach efforts, and address the social determinants of health. Participants included state and local elected officials, faith leaders, and organizations that support individuals on their path to recovery.

With the success of the event, which had 160 people in attendance, GOCI, MOOR, and the Lt. Governor's Office are continuing outreach and collaboration with the faith-based community partners and other community based organizations to promote further collaboration with state partners. An initial follow-up webinar with forum attendees was held in October 2025, and additional events with faith-based organizations will be held throughout next year.



Citizen Advisory Committee

Lt. Governor Miller has prioritized engaging with members of the public and gathering their input during council meetings. During the June meeting, Lt. Governor Miller announced that she was creating a

Citizen Advisory Committee that would meet outside of the MORAC meetings and report to the council quarterly on their discussions. The Citizen Advisory Committee will begin its work in 2026.



Lt. Governor Miller Announces Creation of Citizen Advisory Committee during MORAC Meeting on June 12, 2025

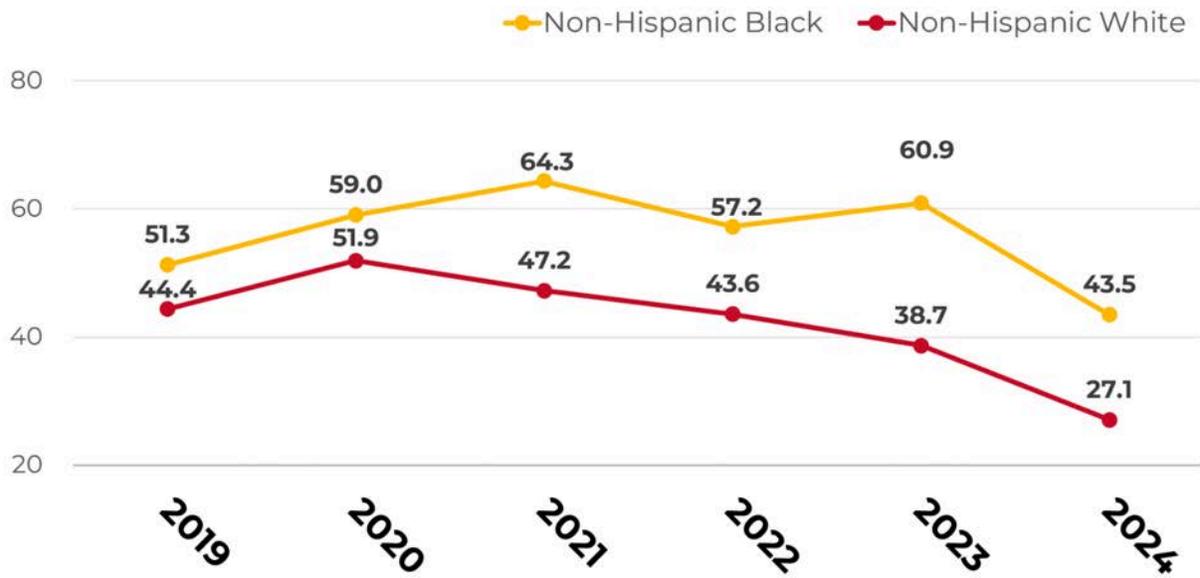
Racial Disparities in Overdose Workgroup

In 2024, the MORAC established a workgroup to assess Maryland's progress toward implementing the recommendations of its former Racial Disparities in Overdose Task Force. The task force was created in 2021 in response to increasing racial disparities in overdose outcomes following the COVID-19 pandemic. Upon concluding its work, the task force submitted a [report](#) identifying four broad intervention opportunities where state agencies could take action to reduce disparities.

Throughout 2025, the new Racial Disparities in Overdose Workgroup collected feedback from state agencies on their efforts under each of the four intervention opportunities. The workgroup found that, while state agencies have made substantial progress in expanding programs that address the needs of minority communities, disparities in overdose trends continue to persist, and sustained and concerted efforts will continue to be an urgent need for the state.

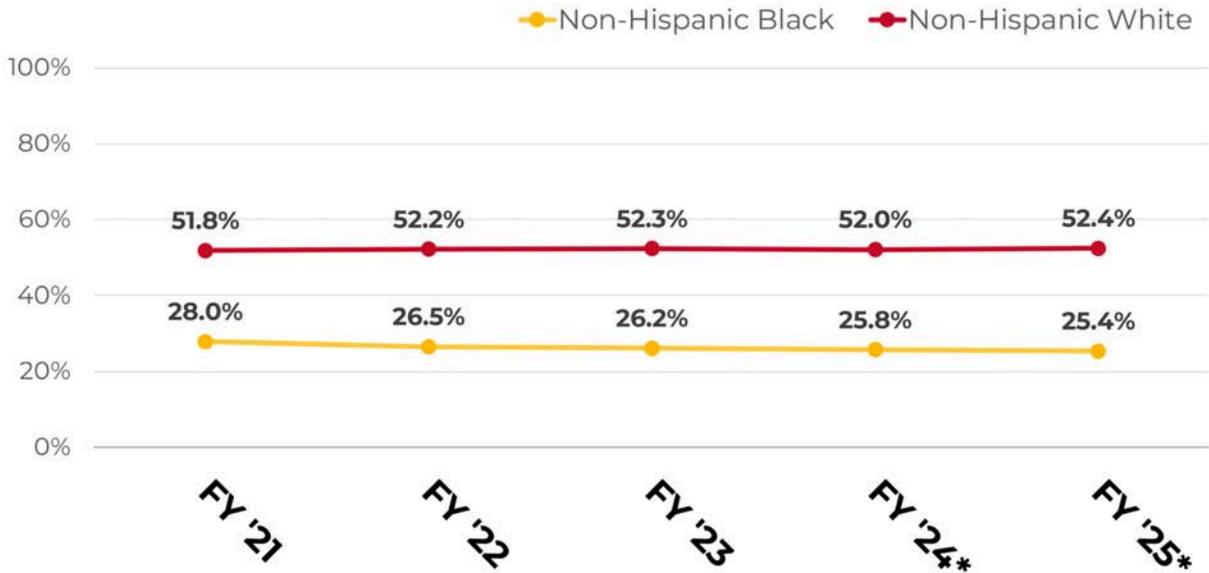
For example, at the time the Racial Disparities in Overdose Task Force was convened in 2021, the fatal overdose rate among Black people in Maryland grew to be 36 percent higher than that among whites. By last year, the fatal overdose rate among Blacks was 61 percent higher despite fatal overdoses decreasing for both groups (see figure 1, below). Lastly, disparities have persisted in access to care. Looking at the number of individuals who received treatment with medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD) through Maryland's Public Behavioral Health System, white people in Maryland consistently received care at much higher rates (see figure 2, below).

Figure 1. Fatal Overdoses in Maryland per 100,000 Population by Race/Ethnicity (2019–2024)



Source: [Maryland Overdose Data Dashboard](#).

Figure 2. Percentage of Individuals that Received MOUD through PBHS by Race/Ethnicity (Fiscal Year 2020–2025)



*Data may be incomplete for FY 2024 and FY 2025 because providers have 12 months from the time of service in which to submit a claim for payment. Source: Behavioral Health Administration.

2024 Advisory Council Recommendations

In 2024, the MORAC identified four areas where Maryland state agencies could focus to enhance the state's ability to reduce overdoses and expand access to services and care for individuals with substance use disorders.

Medications for Opioid Use Disorder in Carceral Settings

In 2024, the MORAC recommended that state agencies work to identify consistent and adequate funding for substance use disorder services (including treatment with MOUD) in carceral settings, consistent with House Bill 116 of 2019 (also known as the Opioid Use Disorder Examination and Treatment Act). The council also recommended expanded discharge planning for individuals leaving incarceration.



Progress Updates

Funding: In the 2025 fiscal year, the state invested over \$20 million to expand MOUD access in state and local facilities. An additional \$22 million was allocated for MOUD expansion in fiscal year 2026.

- GOCPP grants provided \$16,267,902 in FY25 and \$17,398,286 in FY26 to support MOUD access in local facilities. An additional \$5 million from Maryland's Opioid Restitution Fund was allocated in FY25 and FY26, respectively.
- DJS provides multiple forms of MOUD for youth in its facilities.

Discharge Planning: Working through Health Management Associates, Maryland is providing technical assistance to local detention facilities to promote continuity of care planning for individuals leaving incarceration.

- GOCPP is providing stipends to local partners who engage in technical assistance.

Medicaid 1115 Waiver: In 2024, Maryland received approval through the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to begin offering medicaid coverage to individuals 90 days before their release from incarceration through the 1115 Waiver.

- The waiver will be piloted in two facilities in 2026, the Maryland Correctional Institution for Women and the Dorsey Run Correctional Facility in Jessup. The program will be expanded to all DPSCS facilities in the coming years.

Bolster the Behavioral Health Workforce

Maryland, like much of the country, faces significant shortages in the behavioral health workforce. To address this, the MORAC recommended that the state explore opportunities to expand certification and licensure reciprocity with neighboring states. It also proposed investing in career development opportunities for individuals entering the behavioral health workforce.



Progress Updates

Career Development: The state is supporting several programs that provide career development opportunities for individuals entering the behavioral health workforce.

- MOOR awarded over \$550,000 in grants in FY25, supporting both the Community College of Baltimore County and Clay Pots, Inc.
- DOL is launching its new Rural Advancement for Maryland Peers, which will use \$1.6 million from the Opioid Restitution Fund to provide competitive grants that provide peer training opportunities in rural areas of the state.
- MOOR awarded \$131,287 to DOL to provide peer training to individuals leaving incarceration in 10 DPSCS facilities.
- MDH provided over \$438,000 in grant funds to DOL to support Maryland's Recovery Friendly Workplace program, which helps employers to engage and hire people in recovery and foster healthy and safe working environments. The program is currently active in seven local jurisdictions and will be expanded in the coming years.
- DOL's Employment Advancement Right Now (EARN) Maryland and Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Program (MATP) provide training opportunities for individuals entering the behavioral health workforce.
- In 2025, Maryland enacted [Senate Bill 174](#), entering the Interstate [Social Work Licensure Compact](#), which allows licensed social workers to work in any state that has enacted the compact, so long as they maintain an active license in the state where they reside. The state enacted similar measures for [professional counselors](#) and [psychological professionals](#) in 2021.

Reduce Barriers to Treatment

Maryland state agencies are working to address common barriers to substance use treatment. This includes expanding access to transportation for individuals accessing substance use care, housing, child care, and targeted services for underserved populations.



Progress Updates

Transportation

- In FY25, MOOR provided \$1.1 million to six grantees to support transportation services for individuals accessing substance use treatment and recovery services.
- GOCP is providing a \$170,771 grant to the AHEC West Possibility Shop in Allegany County to address the lack of public transportation in the county, provide peer support, health screenings, and referrals for individuals living with SUD.

Low-barrier Treatment Models

- MOOR is providing \$1.5 million to seven grantees that provide low-barrier treatment services
- Maryland is allocating \$300,000 from the Opioid Restitution Fund over the next four years to train emergency medical services personnel in buprenorphine induction.
- Maryland is supporting BHA's Buprenorphine Initiative, allocating approximately \$5 million through FY26 to expand access to MOUD and associated supportive services.
- GOCP is providing \$500,000 to three local jurisdictions to expand telemedicine treatment services.

Treatment for Parents with Children

- MOOR is providing a \$57,000 grant to KidsCare in FY26 to provide childcare support, educational and enrichment workshops, group counseling, and parenting workshops for individuals in recovery.

Culturally Sensitive Treatment Options

- MOOR is providing a grant of \$218,118 to Helping Up Mission in FY26 to provide transportation, education, workforce development, and case management services for adult Hispanic men with SUD.
- Through a grant from GOCP, OPD provides gender-affirming inpatient treatment for recently incarcerated individuals through the Comprehensive Opioid Use Site-Based Program (COAP).

Increase Targeted Outreach

Maryland state agencies are working to increase culturally sensitive prevention and public awareness efforts to reach communities that consider their specific needs.



Progress Updates

Outreach to Aging Populations

- DVMF collaborated with the AARP in November 2024 to host a veteran and military caregiver summit to raise awareness of veteran deaths by overdose and the availability of naloxone.

Youth Prevention Informed by Youth

Progress Updates

- MOOR is providing nearly \$780,000 through 5 grants in FY26 that focus on youth prevention efforts in schools and through afterschool programs.
- MSP collaborates with Boys and Girls Clubs in Maryland to support youth prevention efforts.

Partnerships with Faith-Based Communities

- The Lt. Governor's Office collaborated with the Governor's Office of Community Initiatives and MOOR to host the Faith in Community: Opioid/Overdose Forum in September 2025. This event brought together community and faith-based organizations to share best practices for increasing pathways to substance use recovery.
- MOOR is providing \$482,000 to Helping Up Mission in FY26 through two grants focusing on Recovery support for pregnant and post-partum mothers with infants and toddlers, transportation support, education, and workforce development workshops, and case management for adult Hispanic men with substance use disorders.

Looking Forward

The Advisory Council's Focus For the Upcoming Year

In its final session of 2025, the MORAC discussed the need for sustained progress under each of the recommendations provided in the previous year. The council also set forth additional recommendations for state agencies in their efforts to reduce overdoses and expand access to substance use care. Lastly, Maryland will study the financial landscape for substance use programming in Maryland to help the state optimize its allocation of resources.

Expansion of 2024 Recommendations

Increase Targeted Outreach

Maryland state agencies should sustain efforts to reach underserved and disproportionately impacted populations. These efforts should be broadened to include individuals with disabilities, individuals who speak languages other than English, and minority youth populations.

MOUD in Carceral Settings

Maryland should continue to promote the adoption of the Opioid Use Disorder Examination and Treatment Act by supporting the expansion of treatment with MOUD in carceral settings. This should include offering MOUD induction and expanding the number of facilities that participate in Maryland's 1115 Waiver through the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

2025 Council Recommendations

Increase Access to Housing

Access to stable housing is an essential component for supporting individuals in recovery. Maryland state agencies should work to expand access to housing supports.



Recommendation

- Increase coordination across agencies to ensure that [ASAM level 3.1](#) programs, temporary recovery housing, and permanent supportive housing are meeting the needs of Marylanders.
 - Promote Housing-First approaches at the state and local level.
 - Expand the reimbursable length of stay in recovery housing.
 - Expand recovery housing options that can accommodate parents of young children.
- Promote awareness of recovery housing availability, such as through Maryland's [substance use service locator](#) tool.
- Utilize peers in community housing settings to provide support and expand overdose prevention education.

Increase Engagement with Youth and Families

Sustained action is needed to support individuals accessing treatment and recovery services with young children. Additionally, Maryland should work to expand prevention outreach to youth and services for youth with substance use disorders.



Recommendation

- [Senate Bill 708 of 2025](#) shifts child welfare to a kin-first approach. Maryland should explore kin-first approaches to prevention, services that promote drug user health, treatment, and recovery services for children in out-of-home care.
- Maryland should expand the age limit of its [Sobriety Treatment and Recovery Teams \(START\) Model](#) (which provides specialized coaching and social services to families with a parent with a substance use disorder), from five years of age to 18.
- Maryland should support the expansion of OPD's [Better Together program](#), which aims to reduce family separations for parents with substance use disorders in the criminal legal system.
- Maryland should expand peer recovery services in school settings.
- Explore the expansion of recovery high schools across the state for youth with substance use disorders.

Recommendation

- Maryland should expand youth outreach efforts with an emphasis on underserved and disproportionately impacted communities, such as Hispanic youth.
- Maryland should explore establishing a register of local-level substance use disorder services (similar to Maryland's [Treatment Locator tool](#)) to help families access care.

Enhance Grants Management

Administering grant funds to local and community-based partners is an essential component of Maryland's efforts to advance its priorities for reducing overdoses across the state. Managing these funds effectively, measuring the impacts of grant funding, and ensuring equitable access to grant funds is critical for ensuring that funds are used as efficiently and effectively as possible.



Recommendation

- State agencies should increase technical assistance opportunities for grant applicants to reduce barriers to accessing and managing grant funds.
- Maryland should implement a unified grants management system for state agencies to simplify grantmaking and monitoring.
- Maryland should promote awareness of all funding opportunities related to substance use and overdose through the [Governor's Grants Office](#).

Program Evaluation

While Maryland is implementing a wide variety of programs that seek to reduce overdoses, more analysis of the health outcomes would help identify the most effective solutions for reducing overdoses and health disparities. State partners should also work to identify a unified framework and relevant performance metrics to track their progress.



Recommendation

- Maryland state agencies should work to enhance evaluation of the impacts of their programs addressing substance use and overdose.
- Maryland state agencies should standardize performance measures where feasible.