



## House Bill 794

### *Public Health – Opioid Restitution Fund Advisory Council*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**  
**WITH AMENDMENTS**

To: Appropriations and Health and  
Government Operations Committees

Date: March 1, 2022

From: D’Paul Nibber and Brianna January

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS HB 794 WITH AMENDMENTS**. This bill would, among other provisions, establish the Opioid Restitution Fund Advisory Council to provide specific findings and recommendations regarding the allocation of money from the Opioid Restitution Fund.

In September of 2021, the State of Maryland entered into landmark settlement agreements amounting to \$395 million with opioids manufacturer Johnson & Johnson and three major opioids distributors, McKesson, AmerisourceBergen, and Cardinal Health. A portion of these settlements will be deposited into the Opioid Restitution Fund, which was established to support opioid abatement programming across the state.

Additional contributions are expected from future settlements with opioids manufacturers, distributors, and retailers. Counties have spent years and countless resources pursuing claims against these actors, forcing their retreat into settlements with the State. Given the indispensable role they have played, counties should have input into how future settlement proceeds are spent. Likewise, MACo requests the following amendment to ensure county representation on the Opioid Restitution Fund Advisory Council:

- On page 3, line 12, before “(B)”, insert “**(8) THREE INDIVIDUALS RECOMMENDED BY THE MARYLAND ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES: (I) ONE OF WHOM IS AN INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYED BY A COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT; (II) ONE OF WHOM IS AN INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYED BY A COUNTY CORRECTIONAL FACILITY OR LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY; AND (III) ONE OF WHOM IS AN ELECTED OR APPOINTED OFFICIAL REPRESENTING A COUNTY GOVERNMENT.**”

The above amendment will ensure broader representation of opioid abatement stakeholders, contributing to a more equitable division of future settlement proceeds and additional saved lives. For this reason, MACo urges a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** report for HB 794.