



## House Bill 896

### *Maryland Opioid Use Disorder Consortium*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

Date: March 3, 2015

To: Health and Government Operations Committee

From: Natasha Mehu

The Maryland Association of Counties **SUPPORTS** HB 896. This bill brings together a comprehensive group of stakeholders to develop and implement a statewide plan to tackle opioid use. MACo believes the proposed consortium will be well-served by representatives from local governments.

Opioid-related deaths and usage continues to rise in epidemic proportions. As part of its 2015 initiatives, MACo advocates for comprehensive legislation and budget initiatives to address the growing opioid problem confronting each county and the unique needs of their communities.

HB 896 establishes an Opioid Use Disorder Consortium to develop a strategic statewide plan, including a timeline for actions, to treat and reduce opioid use disorders in the state. The Consortium will convene workgroups to study the prescription drug monitoring program; prescriber and provider education; treatment; public education and awareness; and data analysis. It will also hold roundtables across the state to receive input from local officials and experts on drafting recommendations for the strategic statewide plan.

After development of the statewide plan, the Consortium will coordinate with organizations and work to maximize the impact of tools or initiatives already in place across the state to treat or reduce opioid disorders. This includes local overdose prevention plans and laws establishing local overdose fatality review teams.

By bringing together state and local agencies as well as invested stakeholders, HB 896 maximizes coordination efforts, data and information sharing, and leverages existing resources. A comprehensive plan will help ensure that any existing gaps are identified and addressed and the six-year timeline will ensure that a plan is not only developed but implemented and monitored. For these reasons MACo urges a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 896.