



Senate Bill 1194

Public Health – Substance Abuse Treatment Outcome Partnership Fund

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Finance Committee

Date: March 29, 2017

From: Natasha Mehu

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** SB 1194 as it would provide greater flexibility and increased resources to local governments for substance abuse treatment and related prevention, outreach, and maintenance efforts. Drug-related deaths and crises continue to rise in epidemic proportions. Counties need support to bridge remaining gaps.

SB 1194 enhances the Substance Abuse Treatment Outcome Partnership (STOP) fund program housed in the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. The grant program supports targeted substance abuse treatment services and populations, as proposed by county governments in response to local needs. SB 1194 expands the eligible populations and uses for grant funds to address remaining challenges in addressing substance abuse to include individuals in recovery and recovery support services. It also establishes an \$8.4 million annual appropriation for the fund. The program has been level-funded at \$6.4 million for over a decade. In FY 16, STOP was revitalized to address changing demographics and challenges, but no new funding was appropriated.

Supporting sobriety is a key component in the opioid addiction battle. As counties continue efforts to prevent individuals from falling into addiction and to treat those who have already succumbed to it, it is essential to also provide adequate support to individuals in recovery and at risk for relapse. SB 1194 helps to provide additional resources and support to programs targeting those vulnerable individuals.

Under current law, STOP funds are limited to certain eligible populations such as mothers of drug-addicted infants; needy families receiving temporary cash assistance; adolescents; and pretrial and prerelease correctional inmates. As well as eligible uses including transportation to and from treatment services; coordination staff; data sharing; community emergency behavioral health services or crisis stabilization units; and substance abuse counseling in schools. STOP funding is in addition to and does not replace other State budget appropriations for substance abuse treatment. Awarded funds supplement but do not supplant any current funding a jurisdiction is receiving for substance abuse.

STOP is a successful program for leveraging state and local resources to tackle substance abuse. SB 1194 strengthens the program and expands its reach. For these reasons MACo urges a **FAVORABLE** report.