



Maryland SOS Regional Town Hall Series Impact Statement: Southern Maryland

January 25th, 2022

PREVENTION • TREATMENT • RECOVERY



Before it's too late.

THE OPIOID OPERATIONAL COMMAND CENTER

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The Opioid Operational Command Center (OCCC) hosted the seventh installment Maryland Stop Overdose Strategy (Maryland SOS) Regional Town Hall Series virtually on January 25, 2022. This town hall was focused on residents of the counties of Southern Maryland.

OCCC Executive Director Robin Rickard began the event by providing an update on recent overdose trends in Maryland. She also talked about the Opioid Restitution Fund and addressed the potential uses for funds that the state will receive from legal settlements with prescription opioid manufacturers and distributors. Executive Director Rickard then provided an update on the work of the Racial Disparities in Overdose Task Force on behalf of Dr. Aliya Jones, deputy secretary for Behavioral Health at the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) and co-chair of the task force.

Our second and final presentation during this town hall was from Dr. Laurence Polsky, Health Officer for Calvert County. Dr. Polsky addressed recent overdose trends at the local level and described various programs in Calvert County that address the opioid crisis, such as efforts to assist justice-involved individuals with substance use disorder (SUD) upon their release from detention, youth intervention efforts, and school-based behavioral therapy.

Following our presentations, we invited town hall participants to talk about their experiences with the opioid and overdose crisis and to share their ideas for how state and local officials can do more to help individuals struggling with SUD. The issues addressed by town all participants included:

- The need for close collaboration between state and local partners, including with emergency management agencies, to promote comprehensive opioid crisis response efforts
- The need to support SUD programs and initiatives with long-term funding
- Promoting efforts to reach people in crisis with co-occurring mental health and behavioral health disorders
- Increasing awareness of Maryland's Good Samaritan Law
- Promoting career advancement opportunities for peer recovery specialists and increasing peer compensation
- Expanding reentry programs and job training opportunities for individuals in recovery
- Prompting long-term treatment options beyond the 28 days typically covered by insurance
- Increasing school-based behavioral health resources
- Enacting harsher laws for drug distribution

The OCCC would like to thank everyone who participated in this session for their shared dedication to supporting those who are living with the disease of addiction. The feedback that we received will be used to help inform the 2022 update to Maryland's Inter-Agency Opioid Coordination Plan, the state's strategic opioid crisis response framework.