



**Impact Statement:
Maryland SOS Statewide Virtual Summit**

March 28th, 2022

PREVENTION • TREATMENT • RECOVERY



Before it's too late.

THE OPIOID OPERATIONAL COMMAND CENTER

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On Monday, March 28, 2022, the Opioid Operational Command Center (OCC) hosted a statewide virtual summit to conclude our Maryland Stop Overdose Strategy (Maryland SOS) Regional Town Hall Series. This session was intended to give Marylanders who were not able to attend one of our regional events a final chance to provide public testimony about how the opioid crisis has impacted their communities through the campaign.

The summit began with opening remarks from Lt. Governor Boyd K. Rutherford, who provided a historical overview of the opioid crisis in Maryland and the state's efforts to create a robust and comprehensive response framework through collaboration at the state and local level. OCC Executive Director Robin Rickard then provided 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. Lastly, Executive Director Rickard reviewed testimony that had been received at our Maryland SOS regional events, which involved 10 in-person and virtual sessions.

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 support individuals living with substance use disorder (SUD). The issues addressed by town hall participants included:

- The need to address the underlying factors associated with substance use, such as trauma, adverse childhood experiences, and the social determinants of health
- Promoting alternatives to criminal penalties for drug use and addressing the long-term consequences that criminal convictions have for people in recovery
- Ensuring that efforts to address the opioid crisis balance the needs of chronic pain patients who rely on prescription opioids
- Promoting harm reduction efforts, such as syringe services, and drug testing options, such as fentanyl test strips
- Expanding access to SUD services in detention centers and state prisons, such medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD) and counseling upon discharge
- The dangers of fentanyl in the supply of illicit drugs and the dangers of counterfeit medications containing fentanyl
- The need to increase compensation for peer recovery specialists and expand peer programs
- The potential benefits of implementing overdose prevention sites

- Promoting tools and technology that can alert authorities when people who use drugs alone experience an overdose
- Addressing stigma surrounding treatment and recovery centers in local communities and individuals in treatment and long-term recovery
- Exploring long-term alternatives to daily MOUD treatment plans
- Reducing barriers in the certification process for treatment facilities
- Creating more positive environments for individuals in recovery and supporting recovery communities
- Promoting additional support programs and treatment options for adolescents with SUD and mental health conditions
- The potential benefits of creating a Consumer Health Access Program through House Bill 517/Senate Bill 460, which would help individuals navigate Maryland’s insurance system
 - The OCCC would like to acknowledge the large number of individuals who voiced their support for this legislation
- The need for additional transitional and long-term housing support services for individuals in treatment and recovery

The OCCC would like to thank everyone who participated in all of our regional town halls throughout our Maryland SOS campaign for their shared dedication to supporting those who are living with the disease of addiction. The feedback that we received has truly been invaluable, and it 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.