



**House Health and Government Operations Committee
February 28, 2020**

**House Bill 611
Baltimore County - Behavioral Health - Hub and Spoke Pilot Program**

Support

NCADD-Maryland supports House Bill 611. The hub and spoke model of opioid treatment services expands access to FDA-approved medications and counseling services by creating two interrelated systems of care. Specialists initiate treatment at a hub, typically an opioid treatment program, and care is then transferred to a community-based provider, or spoke, once the patient is stabilized. This model was first created in Vermont and has since been replicated in numerous places, including Baltimore City.

One of the biggest barriers to greater access to office-based prescribed buprenorphine is that primary care providers are not specialists in the area of opioid use disorders. While they receive training before being able to prescribe buprenorphine, they may not be well-connected with counseling services in the area. They also may not know how to best intervene when someone is struggling and possibly nearing relapse.

In the hub and spoke model, consumers receiving services have resources at both the primary care office and the originating hub. If they need additional counseling, they can return to the hub. The hub is also a resource to the provider in the community. If the provider has questions about care or about the need for an intervention, the hub can provide that added support.

Given the numbers of people struggling with opioid use disorders, being able to maximize the existing health care system is smart policy. We urge a favorable report on House Bill 611.

The Maryland Affiliate of the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD-Maryland) is a statewide organization that works to influence public and private policies on addiction, treatment, and recovery, reduce the stigma associated with the disease, and improve the understanding of addictions and the recovery process. We advocate for and with individuals and families who are affected by alcoholism and drug addiction.