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MAJORITY WHIP

Appropriations Committee



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony of Delegate Jazz Lewis on Correctional Services - Medication-Assisted Treatment Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Bartlett, and members of the Judiciary Committee

For the record, Delegate Jazz Lewis here to testify on my legislation, HB1031, to help fund our counties' medication-assisted treatment programs in their correctional facilities. This is a crucial program in our fight to tackle the opioid crisis we are seeing across the nation. Through these programs administered at county facilities, we can identify those in need of treatment and get them the assistance they need to move on from addiction with medically-proven treatments administered by professionals.

But even as we have heard great reports from both those who have been treated and those facilities that administer the program, the funding from the state that required these programs in the first place has not materialized. This has stretched the budgets of county facilities that are looking to continue these plans but might be struggling to meet the budgetary needs to provide these services.

What this bill sets out to do is establish a standard and flexible funding pathway to ensure that counties receive the funding that they need to continue these crucial MAT programs. This funding would emanate from the state portion of the opioid settlement funds or, a general fund appropriation. This will help the state meet its funding obligations to these programs so that we can ensure a crucial piece in our fight against the opioid crisis remains operational.

I also want to note, that we are working on a couple of amendments to restore the requirement that programs have on hand a number of treatment medications as well as a number of technical fixes for the bill. I am happy to provide it to the committee once they are finalized.

Thank you for your attention and for the opportunity to speak on this vital initiative.

With best,

Delegate Jazz Lewis