



House Bill 798

Opioid Restitution Fund - Interactive Dashboard

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**
WITH AMENDMENTS

To: House and Government Operations
Committee

Date: February 19, 2025

From: Karrington Anderson

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS HB 798 WITH AMENDMENTS**. This bill seeks to enhance public transparency by requiring the Maryland Office of Overdose Response (MOOR) and the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) to develop and maintain an interactive dashboard detailing opioid restitution fund spending. The dashboard would provide critical information, including estimated settlement payments to the State and local jurisdictions, past and planned spending, and performance measures for funded initiatives.

While counties support the goal of transparency in opioid settlement fund allocations and spending, MACo respectfully requests amendments to ensure the bill aligns with existing robust county reporting requirements and avoids redundant administrative burdens.

Counties are already subject to copious reporting obligations under multiple funding mechanisms, including:

- **Opioid Restitution Fund (ORF) – 15%** (State use)
- **Targeted Abatement Subfund (TAS) – 60%**
 - 15% (State use – Competitive grants)
 - 45% (Local – Non-competitive grants)
- **Local Allocation – 25%** (Local use, subject to settlement agreement and State law)

Each funding stream requires extensive reporting to the State, which already collects and audits this information under the National Settlement Agreement and the State Subdivision Agreement. Counties submit detailed abatement plans, which are updated every five years, as well as quarterly grant applications, and performance reports for discretionary funds. Additionally, counties provide compliance reports for opioid remediation programs funded by state and federal sources, such as the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention (GOCCP).

Rather than requiring local jurisdictions to submit duplicative reports, HB 798 should direct the Department or MOOR to synthesize and publish information from existing county submissions. This will ensure transparency without creating unnecessary administrative burdens that could divert resources from local opioid remediation efforts.

Finally, the bill as introduced mandates that each local government entity update the State on each public hearing related to the use of settlement funds. This would surely obligate a torrent of unmanageable data to the State, and an ongoing and diffuse burden on local governing bodies.

Counties remain committed to accountability in opioid settlement spending while prioritizing meaningful, life-saving initiatives. MACo urges the Committee to issue a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** report on HB 798, and seek a more administratively workable path.

MACo Amendments on HB 798:

On page 2, in lines 15-18, strike "INFORMATION" down through "RESTITUTION FUND" and substitute "**A LINK TO THE STATE, COUNTY, OR MUNICIPALITY WEBSITE FOR THE PURPOSES OF PROVIDING ACCESS TO INFORMATION ON THE RESPECTIVE STATE, COUNTY, OR MUNICIPALITY'S USE OF SETTLEMENT FUNDS.**";

On page 2, in line 25, after "(3)" insert "**THE DEPARTMENT SHALL UPLOAD OPIOID-RELATED SETTLEMENT INFORMATION SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT BY A COUNTY OR MUNICIPALITY IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE TERMS OF ANY OPIOID-RELATED SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT.**

(4)"; and

On page 2, after line 27, insert "**(5) A COUNTY OR MUNICIPALITY THAT COMPLIES WITH EXISTING OPIOID SETTLEMENT REPORTING REQUIREMENTS AND HAS SHARED THAT DATA WITH THE APPROPRIATE STATE ENTITY SHALL BE DETERMINED TO HAVE COMPLIED WITH THIS SUBSECTION.**".