



HEARING NOTES

Legislative Oversight: LO25-0022

Oversight of the Opioid Restitution Funds

Committee: Public Health and Environment
Chaired by: Chairwoman Phylicia Porter

Hearing Date: Wednesday, July 16, 2025
Time (Beginning): 10:05 AM
Time (Ending): 12:40 PM
Location: Council Chambers
Total Attendance: Approximately 85 In-Person
Approximately 40 Virtually

Committee Members in Attendance:

Phylicia Porter Mark Conway
Mark Parker John Bullock
Odette Ramos James Torrence

Bill Synopsis in the file?	☒ yes	☐ no	☐ n/a
Attendance sheet in the file?	☒ yes	☐ no	☐ n/a
Agency reports read.	☒ yes	☐ no	☐ n/a
Video or audio-digitally recorded?	☒ yes	☐ no	☐ n/a
Certification of advertising/posting notices in the file?	☐ yes	☐ no	☒ n/a
Evidence of notification to property owners?	☐ yes	☐ no	☒ n/a
Final vote taken at this hearing?	☐ yes	☒ no	☐ n/a

Major Speakers

(This is not an attendance record.)

- Sarah Whalen, Mayor's Office of Overdose and Recovery (MOOR)
- Sara Gross, Law Department
- Elizabeth Tantrum, Mayor's Office
- Laura Larsen, Department of Finance
- Public Testimony/Speakers
 - Dave Fell, BHLI

- Vern McCormick, Now Life Recovery Center
- Darci Curwen-Garber, BHRC
- Candy Kerr, BHRC
- Damon Marshall, Nu-Wave Health Services
- Darren Rogers, Executive Director
- Dr. Thurston Smith, Steps 2 Wards Success

Major Issues Discussed

1. Chairwoman Porter gave opening remarks.
2. Public Testimony was allowed first (Approximately seven [7] speakers). Some comments, topics of discussion and/or concerns were:
 - Talked about the PCare Program
 - The importance of partnerships
 - Having proper:
 - Treatment
 - Staff available, and
 - Interaction with clients
 - The importance of meeting people “where they are!”
 - Needs of addicts
 - More funding needed
 - Concern: Employment Opportunities
 - Comments regarding prevention and care
 - Talked about the recent mass overdose that occurred on Pennsylvania Avenue
 - Trust issues, systemic racism and the competitive nature for getting grants
 - More solutions needed, need for critical thinking, more aggressive approach(s) needed
 - Housing issues
 - Concern: Helping the children whose parents are addicts (What is being done in this area?)
 - Per Dr. Smith, addiction is the number one health crisis!
5. Committee member Bullock gave opening remarks. Some were:
 - Takes this issue and/or work seriously
 - We have the opportunity now to do the work needed!
 - There must be transparency when it comes to reaching those that need to be reached!
 - This is not just a Baltimore City issue but a health issue!
6. Sarah Whalen, (MOOR) conjointly with other city agency representatives gave a PowerPoint Presentation, entitled Oversight of the Opioid Restitution Funds. **A copy is on file.**
7. Committee/council members asked questions, stated concerns, and made comments. Some highlighted topics of discussion, comments and/concerns were:
 - **Questions/Comments/Concerns/etc.:**
 - **Requested by Chairwoman Porter:** Would like for Sarah Whalen and her to come up with a plan for getting information out to the communities.
 - a. **Public facing tool kit for the Council to reach out to communities**
 - She also stated that the City Council is their partner!
 - How do you plan to move your operation forward with limited resources? Talk about this.
 - This is a great opportunity for the City to do the work that is needed!
 - Funds awarded thus far:
 - Where are we now with the total amount of dollars received thus far? Talk about this.

➤ Requested by Committee member Conway:

1. Provide the following information: (By column)

- a. The amount of dollars awarded thus far
- b. Dollars that are still pending
- c. How much will be coming off the top for legal fees

2. From the 87 million to be distributed to organizations provide:

- a. How were the organizations chosen?
- b. What was the process?

- He also talked about the importance of having input on the “front end” before making decisions.
- Representatives were asked to talk more about the legal process and how it will impact processes moving forward
- Next Budget Cycle
 - Will the Opioid Restitution Fund be spelled out in the budget book whereas if the Council have questions it can refer to same?
 - Also, will there be monthly or quarterly meetings regarding the Fund? Or any reports that will be forthcoming for same?
- Requested by Committee member Torrence:
 - Provide a list for the organizations receiving funds and grants that will serve his district (to be drilled down with meaningful data)
- Housing Issue(s):
 - This is a really big deal!
 - Much more emphases should focus on housing in the plan! Talk about this.
 - Concern: vacant properties and health disparities
- Role of Hospitals:
 - How are we engaging them? Talk about partnership(s) with the hospitals
 - B-Corp Program: Comments regarding the program and their interaction with hospitals
 - Concern: alignment with hospitals, need to be clearly defined
- To Laura Larsen: In fiscal year 2026, how much is allocated to city agencies? Answer: Approximately \$36 million
 - What is your hope for return on investments? Answer: 3 ½ percent
 - When will the Request for Proposal go out for the \$2 million? Answer: Sometime in the Fall
 - Reinvestment Strategy: When profits (investments) are received will it go back in the fund? Answer: Will go back in the Trust Fund
- Work of the Opioid Fund
 - How will organizations know what the priorities of the funds received will be?
 - When will matrixes (specific) be available?
- Requested by Committee member Parker
 - When available provide what the matrixes will be.
- Prevention Strategies
 - How will prevention strategies be determined?
 - Have you thought about:
 - Working with Prescription monitoring programs, with state partners and having hospitals being part of discussions?
- City Agencies
 - How are you monitoring the breakdown of funds in city agencies?

- How can the Council be more involved in the process?
- Performance Matrixes – How are you measuring success?
 - Comments and concerns regarding quantitative versus qualitative data
- Comments/Remarks: “After hearing the remarks from the public today we need to implement a sound system. How do we make sure we include the needs of all residents? We want to make sure we make a difference with this opportunity!”

8. Chairwoman Porter gave closing remarks. Some of those remarks included:

- Educating public, adequate funding
- Using funds to the best of our ability (what can be spent vs. not spent)
- Comments regarding loss lives
- This is a rare opportunity; rare funding – an opportunity to transform others!

9. Hearing recessed.

Further Study

Was further study requested?

☐ Yes ☒ No

If yes, describe.

1. See “red” highlights above.

Marguerite M. Currin

Marguerite M. Currin, Committee Staff
cc: Bill File

Date: July 28, 2025

Baltimore City Council Committee Hearing Attendance Record

Subject: Legislative Oversight: Oversight of the Opioid Restitution Funds	# LO25-0022
Committee: Public Health and Environment	Chair: Phylicia Porter
Date: Wednesday, July 16, 2025	Time: 10:00 AM
Location: Council Chambers	

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

CHECK HERE TO TESTIFY

First Name	Last Name	Address / Organization / Email	Tel	What is your position on this bill?		Lobbyist: Are you registered in the City?*	
				For	Against	Yes	No
John	Doe	400 N. Holliday St. Johndoenbmore@yahoo.com	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Vera	McLennick	102 Saint Paul St New Life Recovery Center Venneth@newliferecoverycenter.org	✓	✓			
Deborah	Agus	BHLI 2601 N. Howard St Balt. MD	✓				
Dave	Fell	BHLF 2601 N. Howard	✓				
Darci	Curwen-Garber	BHRC 116 E. 25th St. darci@baltimoreharmreduction.org	✓				
Candy	Kerr	" "	✓				
Damon	Marshall	Nowave Health Services					
Achike	Orange	PEP	✓				
Dr. Houston	Smith	Steps 2 WARPS Success	✓				

*NOTE: IF YOU ARE COMPENSATED OR INCUR EXPENSES IN CONNECTION WITH THIS BILL, YOU MAY BE REQUIRED BY LAW TO REGISTER WITH THE CITY ETHICS BOARD AS A LOBBYIST. REGISTRATION CAN BE DONE ONLINE AND IS A SIMPLE PROCESS. FOR INFORMATION VISIT: [HTTPS://ETHICS.BALTIMORECITY.GOV/](https://ethics.baltimorecity.gov/) OR CALL: 410-396-4730

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PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY				What is your position on this bill?	Lobbyist: Are you registered in the City?*		
<u>CHECK HERE TO TESTIFY</u>				For	Against	Yes	No
First Name	Last Name	Address / Organization / Email					
John	Doe	400 N. Holliday St. Johndoenbmore@yahoo.com	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒
Darren	Rogers	I Am mental	☒				

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[illegible]

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City of Baltimore

City Council
City Hall, Room 408
100 North Holliday Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Meeting Minutes - Final

Public Health & Environment Committee

Wednesday, July 16, 2025

10:00 AM
Virtual Du Burns Council Chamber, 4th floor, City Hall, Phone:
#1-408-418-9388, Access code: 2338 662 4705, Password:
Public, Link: [https://bmore.webex.com/bmore/j.php?](https://bmore.webex.com/bmore/j.php?MTID=mdea1eb83ff5dfa57654f250b3a63224c)
MTID=mdea1eb83ff5dfa57654f250b3a63224c

LO25-0022 - Oversight of the Opioid Restitution Funds

CALL TO ORDER

INTRODUCTIONS

ATTENDANCE

Present 6 - Phylicia Porter, Mark Conway, Mark Parker, James Torrence, John Bullock, and Odette Ramos

Absent 1 - Ryan Dorsey

ITEM SCHEDULED FOR PUBLIC HEARING

LO25-0022 Oversight of the Opioid Restitution Funds

For the purpose of assessing the allocation and impact of the Opioid Restitution funds, ensuring they are utilized effectively to support evidence-based strategies that benefit the city's most vulnerable populations.

Hearing recessed.

ADJOURNMENT