



BRANDON M. SCOTT
MAYOR

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From	Dr. Michelle Taylor, Commissioner of Health
Date	May 22, 2026
Subject	LO25-0021 - City's Response to the Opioid Crisis
Request Topic	Academic Detailing; substances involved in fatal overdoses; testing strips in City Schools

Background

At the April 15, 2026 legislative oversight hearing on LO25-0021 - City's Response to the Opioid Crisis, Councilmembers made the following requests:

- Councilmember Porter asked for a meeting with the Commissioner and hospital partners regarding the Academic Detailing Program
- Councilmember Torrence asked whether there are drug testing strips in all City Schools
- Councilmember Conway asked whether we have information on what people are dying from in cases of fatal overdoses (in other words, what drugs were involved in the overdose)

Responses

Academic Detailing

BCHD has reached out to the Councilwoman to arrange a meeting to discuss this item.

Academic Detailing is [a Maryland Department of Health \(MDH\) program](#) that provides one-on-one educational outreach for medical providers to increase prescribers and pharmacists use of evidence-based recommendations for opioid prescribing, opioid safety, and implementation of best practices. MDH and most local health departments in Maryland have this program.

The program is *not* exclusive to hospitals. It works with pharmacists and various kinds of prescribers to ensure health care providers in a wide array of settings are educated and prepared to serve people with opioid use disorder (OUD), including providers who are not part of a hospital system.

The program shares the following types of information with providers:

- Safe and effective pain management
- Evidence-based non-opioid treatment options
- Tapering opioids to safe levels
- Reducing risk for high-risk patients
- Identifying patients who may have OUD
- Exploring harm reduction and medications for OUD treatment options
- Compliance with opioid prescribing guidelines

Test Strips in Baltimore City Public Schools

At this time, BCHD does not provide drug testing strips in health suites or school-based health centers and this is not a funded initiative. Beginning in the 2026-2027 school year, Prince George's County will provide drink spiking detection products and drug detection strips to public high school students in all public high schools, pursuant to state legislation passed in 2026 requiring the Prince George's County Board of Education to provide these items at no cost to students.

Data from the Centers for Disease Control's 2022 Youth Risk Behavior Survey show that about 23% of high school students and 4% of middle school students report having been offered drugs on school property in Baltimore City and that 20% of high school students had at some point lived with a parent or guardian who had a problem with drugs or alcohol.

BCHD runs the K.O.D. (Kids Off Drugs) program, a high-energy, school-based initiative that helps youth avoid or reduce substance use. The program teaches young people about the history of drugs in Baltimore City and the cultural norms that can lead to substance use. The program aims to educate youth about drugs and highlight risky behaviors associated with substance use and its effects on physical and mental health. Through the use of Hip-Hop culture, interactive presentations, and local celebrities, K.O.D. equips youth with skills to navigate peer pressure and foster self-efficacy to empower youth to make informed choices.

Additionally, BCHD is collaborating with CharmTV to develop an overdose awareness communications campaign that will include prevention as a key component.

Which Substances Are Leading to Fatal Overdoses

In 2025, out of the 601 overdose deaths that occurred in Baltimore City:

- 85% were opioid-related
 - 78% were fentanyl-related (a synthetic opioid)
 - 18% were related to prescription opioids
 - 5% were heroin-related
- 58% were cocaine-related
- 13% were alcohol-related
- 4% were methamphetamine-related
- 3% were benzodiazepine-related

The above percentages add up to more than 100% because **many fatal drug- and alcohol-related overdoses involved multiple substances**. This data came from the Maryland Department of Health Overdose Dashboard.