

News: For Immediate Release

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MEDCHI RECOGNIZES NATIONAL RECOVERY MONTH, ENCOURAGES MARYLANDERS TO SUPPORT RECOVERY AND REDUCE STIGMA

BALTIMORE – September -22, 2026 — In recognition of National Recovery Month, MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society, is encouraging Marylanders to recognize the strength of individuals and families affected by substance use disorders, promote compassionate and evidence-based care, and help reduce the stigma that can prevent people from seeking treatment and recovery support.

Observed each September, National Recovery Month celebrates people in recovery and highlights the treatment, services, healthcare professionals, families, and communities that make recovery possible.

Maryland has made significant progress in reducing fatal overdoses. According to the Maryland Department of Health, the state recorded 1,408 fatal overdoses in 2025, a 20% decrease from the previous year and the lowest number of overdose deaths in a decade. The number represents a 66% decrease from Maryland's historic high of 2,800 overdose deaths in 2021.

While Maryland's overdose data shows progress, there is also a need for sustained action. The Maryland Department of Health maintains an Overdose Data Dashboard to provide timely information about overdose trends, including fatal overdoses, emergency department visits, naloxone administration, and other indicators that help prevention and response efforts.

While these trends are encouraging, MedChi emphasizes that the work is far from over.

"Every person in recovery represents an opportunity for hope, healing, and a healthier future," said Dr. Eric Wargotz, President of MedChi. "The decline in overdose deaths in Maryland is encouraging, but we cannot become complacent. We must continue to make sure Marylanders can access evidence-based treatment, compassionate healthcare, recovery services, and the support they need to sustain recovery."

Substance use disorders are treatable health conditions, and recovery can take many forms. MedChi encourages physicians and other healthcare professionals to engage patients in open, respectful conversations about substance use, recognize when additional support may be needed, and connect patients with appropriate treatment and recovery resources.

During National Recovery Month, MedChi encourages Marylanders to:

- **Reduce stigma** by recognizing substance use disorders as health conditions and treating individuals with dignity and compassion.
- **Support recovery** by encouraging family members, friends, colleagues, and neighbors who are seeking or maintaining recovery.
- **Talk openly about treatment** and help people understand that asking for help is a sign of strength.

- **Connect individuals with care** through healthcare professionals, treatment providers, peer-support programs, and community resources.
- **Recognize that recovery is not one-size-fits-all** and that individuals may take different paths toward health and well-being.
- **Continue prevention efforts** and support strategies that save lives and connect people to care.

Physicians are not immune to substance use disorders or the challenges that can accompany addiction and recovery and sometimes need help too. The demands of practicing medicine, including long hours, stress, burnout, and exposure to trauma, can create additional challenges for physicians who may be struggling.

“Physicians spend their careers caring for others, but they also need to know that it is okay to ask for help for themselves,” Gene Ransom, MedChi CEO states. “Our Physician Health Program is an important resource for doctors who may be struggling. Seeking support is not a failure—it is an act of courage and an investment in both the physician and the patients they serve.”

MedChi's Physician Health Program (PHP) provides support to Maryland physicians and physician assistants who may be experiencing substance use, mental health, behavioral health, or other concerns. Physicians do not have to face these challenges alone, and reaching out for help is an important step toward recovery and maintaining a healthy, fulfilling career. MedChi encourages physicians who are concerned about themselves or a colleague to learn more about the resources available through the Physician Health Program and to seek support before a problem reaches a crisis point.

“Recovery happens in communities, and physicians have an important role in creating environments where people feel safe asking for help,” Wargotz said. “We encourage Marylanders to replace judgment with compassion and isolation with connection. Recovery is possible, and everyone deserves the opportunity to pursue it.”

MedChi remains committed to supporting Maryland physicians and promoting policies and practices that improve access to quality healthcare, reduce health disparities, strengthen communities, and improve the health and well-being of all Marylanders.

About MedChi

MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society, is a non-profit membership association of Maryland physicians. Formed in 1799, it is still the largest physician organization in Maryland today. The mission of MedChi is to serve as Maryland's foremost advocate and resource for physicians, their patients, and the public health of Maryland. For more information, please visit www.medchi.org.