

University of Maryland-led BCORE initiative gets major boost from opioid funds

\$10 million award will fund overdose prevention and recovery coordination across Baltimore



Mayor Brandon Scott holds a news conference at City Hall announcing the city's Opioid Restitution Fund. (Barbara Haddock Taylor/Staff)



By [Chevall Pryce](#)

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One of the largest shares of Baltimore's [\\$80 million opioid settlement](#) with Walgreens will go to the Baltimore Comprehensive Overdose Response to End the Epidemic, or BCORE, a nascent collaboration between the city and the University of Maryland School of Medicine.

BCORE is set to receive \$10 million, one of the top three awards from that lawsuit. Established in April 2024 as a collaboration led by [University of Maryland School of Medicine](#) in partnership with Baltimore and multiple community health organizations, BCORE is a citywide effort created through a grant from the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health, first established by investigators with University of Maryland School of Medicine's Institute for Health Computing.

Its partners include Maryland universities, the city's health and fire departments and the mayor's office.

Martha Jurczak, assistant dean for business and economic development at the UMD School of Medicine, said the collaboration aims to connect people with an addiction to already established services. Jurczak is the principal [investigator who initiated BCORE](#). She is also collaborating with Eric Weintraub, a professor of psychiatry at the medical school.

“What we are working to do is to make that connection from crisis response, acute care in the emergency department, to recovery services, access to medications for opioid use disorder and then social services as well,” Jurczak said.

BCORE will utilize [Goldie Health](#), an overdose prevention system created by University of North Carolina to address people with [substance use disorder](#). Goldie facilitates care by connecting users who have reached a point of crisis to community outreach teams and other services.

If a person is receiving acute care for addiction, their information is entered into [Goldie](#), which connects them to outreach teams, medicine, peer groups and other chances to recover. Patients will be referred via a telemedicine line, emergency services or Baltimore City Fire Department health units who will be using Goldie.

“When we encounter patients in these three settings, we can seamlessly connect them to longer term care and services,” Jurczak said. “[Goldie] facilitates care in traditional settings

with features like dropping a pin if you're seeing a patient who is unhoused ... you can have a patient sign for consent to be treated right on the screen of the mobile app."

The Opioid Restitution Fund has earmarked \$10 million for BCORE, \$2,941,443 of which has already been approved for the program for the 2026 fiscal year, according to a grant agreement with the Baltimore Board of Estimates. The total award amount will be spread out over the course of three years.

Jurczak said this round of funding will go toward doubling the Baltimore Fire Department population health team, working with Johns Hopkins University and 11 emergency service departments to help providers become more comfortable prescribing medications for opioid use disorder, and expanding the People Encouraging People outreach team.

Weintraub, who is also an associate director for [Kahlert Institute for Addiction Medicine](#) at the UMD School of Medicine, has 30 years of experience in addiction medicine.

"There are groups of individuals that are underserved or just don't do well in brick-and-mortar treatment facilities, so our goal is to reach these people," he said. "Now we'll get them started on lifesaving medication, connect them to services they need to build and recover and get housing.

Like other organizations receiving money from the Opioid Restitution Fund, BCORE has several goals and metrics it must meet within its yearlong contract, which began Sept. 15. These include reaching target numbers for people engaged, services provided, prescriptions given, encounters had, referrals initiated and workforce engagement.

BCORE will also establish an easy-to-access [telemedicine line](#).

"We're supposed to have our first [telemedicine] call within six months of the contract so we're in the process of building the system," Weintraub said.

As BCORE begins its work a little over a month after receiving funding, Jurczak said the collaboration could not have come at a better time as technology and information about addiction have improved in recent years.

"We didn't actually form BCORE in response to the restitution funds – that was sort of a happy accident that the restitution funds came as we were developing this program," Jurczak said. "Eric's been doing this work for so long and know so many people across the city and it just felt like a good time to capitalize on those connections."

Have a news tip? Contact Chevall Pryce at cpryce@baltsun.com.