



Daniel Carl Torsch Foundation

New day. New beginning.

March 13, 2023

The Honorable Melony Griffith
Chair, Finance Committee
3 East, Miller Senate Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**RE: SUPPORT of Senate Bill 618
(Public Health – Overdose and Infectious Disease Prevention Services Program) –
FAVORABLE**

Dear Chair Griffith and Senate Finance Committee Members,

The Daniel Carl Torsch Foundation (DCTF), supports Senate Bill 618 “Overdose and Infectious Disease Prevention Services Program,” which will allow community based organizations to establish overdose prevention programs to reduce overdose deaths, which continue to occur at unprecedented levels in Maryland.

The DCTF began its service in Perry Hall of Baltimore County and whose mission has evolved into harm reduction programs including syringe services. We are in many communities and counties across Maryland offering street outreach and have witnessed firsthand the extreme need for overdose prevention sites (OPS). An OPS would be another tool in our toolbox to be able to use and refer a client to a safe space. We are keeping the individual safe as well as the community. We’re not asking to make OPS mandatory, only an option. An option that will save lives.

In 2022, we lost over 2,400 Marylanders to fatal overdoses. We urge the General Assembly to authorize this pilot program of overdose and infectious disease prevention services, an intervention proven to decrease overdose deaths. The proposed Overdose and Infectious Disease Prevention Services Program mirrors the 200 such programs already established across the world in 14 countries, including two in the United States. In the 200 OPS around the world, in which millions of supervised drug use interactions have occurred, no one has died of a fatal overdose.

This is an emergency, and we urge you to act now. We ask that the Finance Committee give SB618 a favorable report.

For more information about DCTF or this position, please contact me.

Regards,

Toni Torsch, Director

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