



February 27, 2026

The Honorable Heather Bagnall
Chair, House Health Committee
240 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: SUPPORT of House Bill 1485

Public Health - Crisis Response System - Resources for Family Members and Trauma-Informed Care Training (Tiarra's Law)

Dear Chair Bagnall, Vice Chair Cullison, and House Health Committee Members,

The Baltimore Harm Reduction Coalition (BHRC) writes to express our **strong support** of **House Bill 1485 - Public Health - Crisis Response System - Resources for Family Members and Trauma-Informed Care Training (Tiarra's Law)**. This bill is a critical step toward ensuring Marylanders are connected to support during some of the most traumatic and vulnerable moments of their lives - after the death, overdose, or behavioral health crisis of a loved one.

BHRC is an overdose response program and one of 29 Maryland Department of Health-authorized syringe service programs in the state. We partner with local churches for daily street outreach to ensure that people who use drugs have critical survival items and connections to stabilizing care. Each week, we directly engage with more than 300 community members. We hear regularly from participants that they've witnessed loved ones overdose, that they've reversed overdoses by administering naloxone and rescue breaths to loved ones, and that they've lost multiple friends and family members to overdose. When this trauma goes unsupported, the consequences are clear: it deepens isolation and increases chaotic self-medication as people attempt to cope. These outcomes can be deadly.

Our staff understand this trauma personally and professionally. Many have lost loved ones to overdose and have reversed numerous overdoses while on outreach. As an organization, we intentionally provide support to staff after these events. Yet even with training, experience, and organizational support, overdose response remains traumatic. Maryland residents who witness these events without connections to support face an even greater and impossible burden.

Currently, Marylanders have few accessible resources directly after experiencing the death, overdose, or crisis of a loved one. They must navigate grief, trauma, and the massive disruptions to their lives (loss of income, caregiving responsibilities, housing instability) largely on their own. **While incredible support services exist, they are only effective if people are connected to them at the moment they need them most.** House Bill 1485 would help close this gap by ensuring families and loved ones have connections to timely, trauma-informed support. This is a common-sense, compassionate measure that recognizes the profound impact of behavioral health crises and overdose on families and communities.

For these reasons and more, BHRC respectfully urges a favorable report on House Bill 1485.

For more information about this position, please contact Darci Curwen-Garber, BHRC Policy Manager, at darci@baltimoreharmreduction.org.

Sincerely,

The Baltimore Harm Reduction Coalition (BHRC)