



**Brandon M. Scott**  
*President*  
Baltimore City Council

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100 Holliday Street, Suite 400 · Baltimore, Maryland 21202  
410-396-4804 · Fax: 410-539-0647  
e-mail: [councilpresident@baltimorecity.gov](mailto:councilpresident@baltimorecity.gov)

**HB 464**

February 26, 2020

**TO:** The Honorable Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee

**FROM:** The Honorable Brandon M. Scott, President of the Baltimore City Council

**RE:** HOUSE BILL 464 – Public Health – Overdose and Infectious Disease Prevention Services Program

**POSITION: SUPPORT**

I write to you in **support** of House Bill 464. This bill will provide proven life-saving methods to prevent fatal overdoses in our state.

Baltimore City, my home, has had an overdose crisis my entire lifetime. For much of my 35 years, people dealing with addiction have not been treated with compassion and understanding. As a result, countless lives have been lost. In Baltimore City alone, more than 3,500 people have died from a fatal overdose since 2015. These are more than numbers or statistics, these are hopes and dreams gone from our world forever.

This is a human health crisis. People are dying and we need to save lives now. Overdose prevention services work. They keep people alive. There are over 150 overdose prevention sites around the world, with many operating for decades. In all of that time, zero people have died from an overdose.

Imagine if those 3,500 people lost in Baltimore could still be alive due to overdose prevention services. Instead, their deaths have caused pain and trauma in entire communities as families and friends have reckoned with the death of their siblings, children and parents. We must humanize drug users and prioritize their lives for our state and city.

In January, I called for an informational hearing on overdose prevention sites in the Baltimore City Council (20-0189R) so that we can start this conversation locally with our City agencies, direct service providers, advocates, and the impacted community.

Overdose prevention services are one crucial way to value life using a harm reduction approach. I urge you to move for a **favorable** report on House Bill 464.