

Members of the House and Government Operations Committee,

I wanted to reach out and encourage you to keep up the fight against the "free needle program" going on in Washington County. This only enables current drug users, and encourages those who may only have a pill addiction, but can no longer afford that addiction, to switch up to heroin. With easy access to needles and cooking supplies, the original high costs of pills may no longer be something that addicts are willing to pay. They'll instead choose to switch up their drug of choice, if given easy access to user paraphernalia. I've had many family members fall in to scary addiction patterns from pills, and turn to heroin, so this issue hits close to home. It also makes me very weary, with small children of my own now, that this kind of program will be in place close to my home. As a mother, this program also concerns me that user paraphernalia will just be handed out to anyone that is a drug user, including minors. That right there just pushes my last button. It should be a parents right on how to help rehabilitate their child, should they have any addiction issues.

I feel like over the years opioid addictions have not gotten better in Frederick or Hagerstown, it's almost as if it's the heart of the issue over the past 10-15 years. I was actually walking through a park in Mount Airy over the summer, and saw dirty needles behind a bench in Watkins park. I was lucky that my 2 year old was in her stroller instead of walking. It was clear as day, and had she been walking, may have seen that and ran over and picked it up. This kind of program also puts more needles out in to society, to be littered in secluded, yet public areas. Do I think that there needs to be a responsible way of helping rehabilitate drug users in the state? Absolutely, but this isn't it.

There needs to be some sort of program in place where opioid and other habit forming medications can't be prescribed to any one under the age of 18. We need to be putting more limits on pharmaceutical companies, instead of handing it out like candy

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