

January 26, 2020

Chair Delores Kelly

Finance Committee

Miller Senate Office Building, 3 East

Annapolis, MD 21401

**RE: SUPPORT of Senate Bill 279**

**(Public Health - Overdose and Infectious Disease Prevention Services Program) - FAVORABLE**

Dear Chair Kelly and Senate Finance Committee Members,

Baltimore Harm Reduction Coalition, BHRC mobilizes community members for the health, dignity, and safety of people targeted by the war on drugs and anti-sex worker policies.

We advocate for harm reduction as part of a broader movement for social justice. supports Senate Bill 279 "Overdose and Infectious Disease Prevention Services Program," which will allow community based organizations such as our organization to establish overdose prevention programs to reduce overdose deaths, which continue to occur at unprecedented levels in Maryland.

Baltimore Harm Reduction Coalition is an organization that educates and mobilizes people who are using drugs and selling sex. We provide life saving equipment to the people most affected by the epidemic. Overdose Prevention Sites will enable us to better serve the people in need.

**For over 30 years, it has been proven that Overdose Prevention Sites save lives.** We urge the General Assembly to authorize overdose and infectious disease prevention services, a proven intervention used across the globe to decrease overdose deaths. The proposed Overdose and Infectious Disease Prevention Services Program mirrors more than 150 such programs already established across the world. More than 60 cities in 12 countries operate such programs, and numerous studies demonstrate the positive impacts. In all of the 150+ OPS around the world, in which millions of supervised drug injections have occurred, **no one has died of a fatal overdose.**

**We ask that the Finance Committee give SB279 a favorable report.**

For more information about Baltimore Harm Reduction Coalition or this position, please contact Candy at [candy@baltimoreharmreduction.org](mailto:candy@baltimoreharmreduction.org).