



# Daniel Carl Torsch Foundation

New day. New beginning.

March 7, 2023

The Honorable Joseline A. Peña-Melnyk  
Chair, House Health and Government Operations Committee  
Room 241, House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**RE: SUPPORT of House Bill 953  
(Public Health – Overdose and Infectious Disease Prevention Services Program) –  
FAVORABLE**

Dear Chair Peña-Melnyk and House Health and Government Operations Committee Members,

The Daniel Carl Torsch Foundation (DCTF), supports House Bill 953 “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.

DCTF’s mission has evolved into harm reduction programs including syringe services. We are in many communities across Maryland offering street outreach and have witnessed first hand the extreme need for overdose prevention sites (OPS). Even if they are not in each jurisdiction, we would be able to refer a client a place to be safe. 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 overdose and infectious disease prevention services, an intervention proven to decrease overdose deaths for over 30 years. 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 all of 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 Health and Government Operations Committee give HB953 a favorable report.

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

Regards,

Toni Torsch, Director

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