

HB0953

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FAV

My name is Isabel Klompus and I am a licensed social worker in Baltimore City. I support (FAV) House Bill 0593 Public Health – Overdose and Infectious Disease Prevention Services Program because it is imperative that these services be available to the people of Maryland. Overdose deaths have only surged in the past few years, and our people continue to die. The rise of fentanyl has only exacerbated this issue. Overdose prevention sites are places where people who use drugs can use safely, using new and clean supplies, avoiding the risk of infection from sharing tools such as syringes. But more impactful than this, these sites allow people to use drugs while being observed by medical professionals who can ensure that overdose does not occur, and reverse it immediately when it does.

There are many overdose prevention sites functioning all over the world, and saving lives every day. I was able to visit On Point in Harlem, New York City, one of two sites open in the country. I saw first hand how impactful their work has been for their community, and I know that it would be equally impactful in Maryland. As a social worker, I work with many people who use drugs, and I see how much they struggle to find safe spaces where they are respected and taken care of with compassion. Nearly everyone I know in Baltimore knows someone who has died from fatal overdose. We must take action now, and I know that opening overdose prevention sites in our state is the best way to start.