



February 7, 2023

The Honorable Luke Clippinger
Chairman, House Judiciary Committee
Room 101, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

**RE: SUPPORT of House Bill 173
(Criminal Law - Drug Paraphernalia for Administration - Decriminalization) - FAVORABLE**

Dear Chair Clippinger and House Judiciary Committee Members,

Voices of Hope, Inc. supports House Bill 173 (Criminal Law - Drug Paraphernalia for Administration - Decriminalization) which will revise existing criminal law to remove items that could be used to consume drugs from what is considered drug paraphernalia, effectively decriminalizing possession of those items.

Voices of Hope, Inc. is a nonprofit recovery community organization that serves Cecil and Harford County. We employ 50 people in recovery, family members and allies who are passionate about helping people who struggle with addiction to stay alive and find and maintain long term recovery. Removing penalties for having sterile drug use supplies will encourage people who use drugs to engage with harm reductionists who offer access to health care, substance use treatment and recovery support.

We believe that this bill will simplify Maryland's paraphernalia laws and clarify that possession of harm reduction supplies to prevent infectious disease is not a crime. **We ask that the Judiciary Committee give HB173 a favorable report.**

For more information about Voices of Hope or this position, please contact me at JenniferTuerke@voicesofhopemaryland.org.

Jennifer Tuerke
Executive Director