



MDDCSAM is the Maryland state chapter of the American Society of Addiction Medicine whose members are physicians and other health providers who treat people with substance use disorders.

Senate Bill 427 - Overdose and Infectious Disease Prevention Services Programs
Senate Finance Committee February 20, 2024.

FAVORABLE

by Jessica Friedman, MD, MPH, for MDDCSAM

On behalf of the Maryland-DC Society for Addiction Medicine, I am writing to support Senate Bill 427, which authorizes the establishment of up to six Overdose and Infectious Disease Prevention Services Programs in the state of Maryland.

Over the last decade, Maryland saw a rapid increase in the number of deaths due to drug and alcohol overdose, largely driven by the entrance of illegally-manufactured fentanyl and similar drugs into the illicit drug supply. During this time, the General Assembly has reacted swiftly, enabling the distribution of naloxone and sterile supplies for drug administration, expanding the Good Samaritan law, and making substance use disorder treatment more available statewide. These laws, in combination with the data-driven approaches at the Maryland Department of Health, have saved lives and helped many people access treatment. **Preliminary data suggest that, in 2023, overdose deaths began to decrease.**

But our work is not done. **People continue to die of overdose at rates double to those seen in 2015.** Nationally, we see trends in increased overdose deaths involving methamphetamine and the introduction of new drugs like xylazine into the drug supply. We, and the communities we serve, need evidence-based approaches to reducing the deaths and harms associated with drug use. **Overdose and Infectious Disease Prevention Services Programs consistently reduce overdoses, decrease infections related to drug use, and connect people to substance use treatment without increasing crime or drug use.**

Thanks to the investment that our state has made in creating Overdose Response Programs, Syringe Services Programs, and Opioid Prevention Teams, we have the infrastructure and willing community partners to create and administer these new programs. For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 427.