

February 11, 2024

Senator Antonio L. Hayes

James Senate Office Building, Room 223

11 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401

**RE: Support Senate Bill 427**

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

Dear Senator Antonio L. Hayes,

I am a nursing student at Johns Hopkins University who supports the Senate Bill 427 (Overdose and Infectious Disease Prevention Services Program) which will provide a location for the consumption of pre-obtained drugs, provide sterile needles, administer first aid, and certain other services. Additionally, it will allow billing the insurance carrier of the individual who uses the services of the program for the cost of services, accept donations, grants, and other financial assistance and coordinate with certain programs or organizations.

I am not a representative of the University, but I am currently studying the importance of public health nursing where I have learned the importance of harm reduction. For my clinical experience, I have been placed at a few locations that provide harm reduction services to individuals who use drugs by offering supplies to those who use drugs such as providing clean needles, wound care kits, naran, and health care services in an attempt to reduce the risk of infection and prevent overdose. These services can only do so much, but with the addition of this legislation, the risk of overdose mortality and morbidity can be reduced significantly. In the city of Baltimore from 2021, the drug overdose rate is 42.8 (per 100,000) people.<sup>1</sup> The passing of this bill will have a positive effect on the population of interest. Safe spaces for people who inject drugs can reduce the risk of overdose, blood-borne diseases, and likelihood of arrest, and the potential of the environment in promoting health and risk.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, overdose prevention centers in other cities, such as San Francisco and New York, have been shown to decrease overdose morbidity and mortality. In San Francisco, the prevention center reversed 333 overdoses and had zero deaths in 2022. Overdose prevention centers have been shown to improve injection safety behaviors and expand access to treatment without increasing crime or public nuisance.<sup>3</sup>

I believe this bill will decrease overdose morbidity and mortality and I ask that you vote in support for SB0427.

Sincerely,

Shantia Shadjareh

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/states/maryland/maryland.htm>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0955395918300963>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2023/04/opioid-overdose-prevention-centers#:~:text=A%20systematic%20review%20of%20studies,increase%20crime%20or%20public%20nuisance%20>