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HB1096

March 1, 2024

TO: Members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee
FROM: Nina Themelis, Director of Mayor's Office of Government Relations
RE: House Bill 196 - Public Health – Overdose and Infectious Disease Prevention Services Program
POSITION: FAVORABLE

Chair Peña-Melnyk, Vice Chair Klausmeier, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** House Bill (HB) 1096.

HB 1096 will authorize the establishment of an Overdose and Infectious Disease Prevention Services Program (OIDPSP) by a community-based organization. OIDPSP will provide a safe space for people who use drugs (PWUD) to consume pre-purchased substances in a supervised setting. Often staffed by healthcare workers, case managers, and/or peers, consumers will have access to wraparound services to address their needs.

According to the Maryland Department of Health, overdose deaths continue to rise in Maryland, with a nearly 18% increase since 2019.ⁱ We must take a bold step to save the lives of our loved ones by leveraging an OIDPSP. **OIDPSP are proven to be effective and safe:** nearly 200 sites are operational in 14 countries, none of which have ever had an overdose death.ⁱⁱ Since launching in November 2021, OnPoint, an OIDPSP in New York City, has reversed more than 1,300 overdoses and has had 0 deaths at their two locations. Having served 4,486 unique participants with over 117,000 total visits, OnPoint not only saves lives but is an access point for services. In its first year of operation alone, 75% of OnPoint participants accessed wrap-around services including but not limited to treatment, primary care, food access, housing, and employment.ⁱⁱⁱ

Over 100 peer-reviewed studies have shown the positive impacts OIDPSP have on communities and those who use them.ⁱⁱ Saving lives with Naloxone (also known as “Narcan”) is one of the most immediate benefits. Studies also show a reduction in HIV and Hepatitis C transmission rates, an increase in access to and engagement in treatment, a reduction in the amount and frequency clients use drugs, cost savings for the medical system(s), and a reduction in syringe litter and/or other drug paraphernalia.ⁱⁱ

Overdose deaths are preventable. OIDPSP's can play a critical role combatting the opioid crisis. For these reasons, the BCA respectfully requests a **favorable** report on HB 1096.

ⁱ Maryland Department of Health. (2021). Unintentional Drug and Alcohol-Related Intoxication Deaths. Retrieved from https://health.maryland.gov/vsa/Documents/Overdose/2021_AnnualIntoxDeathReport.pdf

ⁱⁱ The Drug Policy Alliance. (n.d.). Overdose Prevention Centers. Retrieved from <https://drugpolicy.org/issues/supervised-consumption-services>

ⁱⁱⁱ OnPoint NYC. (2021). About Us. Retrieved from <https://onpointnyc.org/>