



February 4, 2025

The Honorable Senator Pamela Beidle  
Chair, Senate Finance Committee  
3 East, Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**RE: SUPPORT of Senate Bill 0083  
(Public Health – Overdose and Infectious Disease Prevention Services Program) - FAVORABLE**

Dear Chair Beidle and Senate Finance Committee Members,

My name is Rachel Luce, a services manager Baltimore Harm Reduction Coalition, and I'm writing to **support Senate Bill 0083 "Overdose and Infectious Disease Prevention Services Program"**. SB0083 will allow community based organizations to establish overdose prevention programs to reduce overdose deaths, which continue to occur at alarming levels in Maryland.

Baltimore Harm Reduction Coalition is a community-based organization that is both a syringe service and overdose response program. For the past three years, I've directly engaged with thousands of your constituents in Baltimore who are in support of overdose prevention centers.

Between December 2023 and November 2024, we lost 1,689 Marylanders to fatal overdoses. We urge the Maryland General Assembly to authorize overdose and infectious disease prevention services, **an intervention proven for over 35 years of research to decrease overdose deaths**. The proposed Overdose and Infectious Disease Prevention Services Program mirrors the **200 evidence-based public health interventions already established across the world in 14 countries, including two in the United States**. Trained personnel monitor participants for signs of overdose and intervene to prevent or reverse overdoses. In addition to overdose prevention services, OPCs provide a welcoming space that helps bring drug use indoors and connect people to long-term, life-sustaining resources, **like addiction services and social supports, including voluntary treatment**.

In the summer of 2024, the overwhelming majority of our syringe service program clients who completed our satisfaction survey confirmed that they believe an overdose prevention center would be beneficial in their community, and that they personally would use one. Additionally, your constituents expressed interest in the various other services that could be provided at an overdose prevention center including: medical supervision during drug use, wound care, access to sterile needles and supplies, testing for drug purity, counseling services, referrals to substance use treatment programs, and homeless services.

Not only do overdose prevention centers address the avoidable fatalities of the overdose crisis in our state, but they also serve as a hub for community resources, opportunities for self-motivated change, and reduce public drug use and syringe litter.

This is an emergency and we urge you to act now. **We ask that the Senate Finance Committee give SB0083 a favorable report.**

For more information about Baltimore Harm Reduction Coalition or my favorable position, please contact me at [rachel@baltimoreharmreduction.org](mailto:rachel@baltimoreharmreduction.org).

I deeply appreciate your consideration,  
Rachel Luce