

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 Dr. Ari Goldstein and I am 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.

I am a family physician by training. I did my residency at University of Maryland Medical Center where I primarily served the citizens of West Baltimore. I am now at Johns Hopkins getting additional training in preventive medicine and public health. I have seen too many casualties of the opioid epidemic. My patients are suffering, and sadly sometimes dying, due to our lack of intervention. I have worked in primary care, urgent care, addiction clinics, inpatient medicine, and more – patients in each of these settings have suffered issues that could have been prevented or at least ameliorated by Overdose Prevention Sites. Our community members need your support. Many who oppose this policy complain that it is tacit endorsement of substance use. This is blatantly untrue and defiant of the facts. The truth is that OPS just accept what is obviously reality and do what they can to help people not get sick and die. A dead person cannot utilize substance use treatment services. We have to help our friends, family, and neighbors stay alive – that is the most basic tenet of my work in medicine and public health. OPS allow people to maintain the ability to create whatever life they choose. They have already done that for people in New York, Canada, Europe, and elsewhere; why are we depriving our communities of this?

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, OPSs 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.

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 myself or my position. Please contact me at [ari.jordan.goldstein@gmail.com](mailto:ari.jordan.goldstein@gmail.com).

Sincerely,

Ari Goldstein, MD