

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 Laisha Martinez with F#ck The Stigma, Inc. a 501(c)3 nonprofit 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.

Our nonprofit’s mission is to raise awareness to mental health and addiction issues to break the stigma that prevents people from seeking help or resources for what they’re struggling with. We’ve donated hundreds of doses of naloxone to various communities here in the DMV as well as L.A. county. I care deeply about this mission because of my personal experience with addiction and struggles with mental health. With being a part of this community I’ve seen too many people pass away from overdose. Overdose prevention sites would greatly benefit our organization and community.

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.

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 F#ck The Stigma or this position, please contact Laisha Martinez at laisha@fthestigma.com