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January 21, 2025

Senate Finance Committee
Senator Shelly Hettlemen , and Members of the Committee
3 East Miller State Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: SB-83 Public Health- Overdose and Infectious Disease Prevention Services Program

Position: Favorable with Amendment

Dear Senator Hettlemen and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for your concern affecting this important matter. The testimony I am submitting represents my personal opinion only and does not in any way, shape, manner, or form represent any other person, public or private agency or governmental agency.

I owned and operated an dual diagnosis Substance Disorder and Mental Health Program and provided evaluations for level of care determinations for other Programs, the Courts, and public and private agencies. I am familiar with the issues presented in this legislation.

Please consider adding security services to these locations. Also please consider how a person arrives and leaves the locations. If the client drives a vehicle and uses substances, the person will be impaired when the person leaves. This has been a problem at many facilities due to the misuse of drugs along with the use of the prescribed medication (methadone) at the location. Security has been involved if the car is parked on the property, if not parked on the property, the Program does not get involved.

In this situation created by this legislation, the client is encouraged to use substances, what will prevent the person from leaving and driving impaired. Nothing! Therefore, measures must be taken to protect the public from an impaired driver. Perhaps, mandating contracting with taxi services and M-DOT Mobility (by definition the clients using the services affected by this legislation have an impairment which affects their function).

Sincerely,

Electronically signed

Arthur Flax, LCSW-C, LCPC, LCADC

State of Maryland Licensed Certified Social Worker- Clinical; Licensed Clinical Alcohol Drug Counselor, DHMH; Evaluator for the Workers Compensation Commission; Licensed Health Care Provider, HG-8-403 (HB-1510 enrolled bill -2014) in compliance with DHMH Behavioral Health Integration enacted statutes and regulations. Direct Pay Non-Attorney Advocate approved by the Social Security Administration.