

February 26, 2025

The Honorable Chair Delegate Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk  
Chairman, Health Government and Operations Committee  
Room 240 Taylor House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**RE: SUPPORT of House Bill 845**

**(Public Health – Overdose and Infectious Disease Prevention Services Program) - FAVORABLE**

Dear Chair Pena-Melnyk and members of the Health Government and Operations Committee,

My name is Lukah Love, and I'm writing to support House Bill 845 "Overdose and Infectious Disease Prevention Services Program". HB845 will allow community based organizations to establish overdose prevention programs to reduce overdose deaths, which continue to occur at alarming levels in Maryland.

Overdose prevention sites are an evidence-based way to care for our friends, family, and neighbors who use drugs and/or have loved ones who do. By providing an inviting, nonjudgemental space for people to use the drugs they have already purchased elsewhere, we will be keeping safe those utilizing the space by offering care in the case of unexpected reactions to their drugs, connections to other holistic care options, a warm place to rest, friendly faces, and personal dignity, among many other benefits. We will also be caring for our community at large by refusing to abandon our loved ones to use their drugs in often dangerous and unsanitary public spaces, and instead providing a space for them to get off the street, use their drugs in private, and have safe disposal options for their drug use supplies. In the 30+ years that overdose prevention sites have been operating around the globe, not a single overdose death has been reported in any of these facilities. Overdose prevention sites save lives.

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 Health Government and Operations Committee give HB845 a favorable report.**

For more information about this position, please contact me, Lukah Love, at [lukahlove@gmail.com](mailto:lukahlove@gmail.com).