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**HB0845**

February 26, 2025

**TO:** Members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee

**FROM:** Nina Themelis, Director of Mayor's Office of Government Relations

**RE:** House Bill 845 - Public Health – Overdose and Infectious Disease Prevention Services Program

**POSITION: FAVORABLE**

Chair Peña-Melnyk, Vice Chair Cullison, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** House Bill (HB) 845.

HB 845 will authorize the establishment of up to six Overdose and Infectious Disease Prevention Services Programs (OIDPSP) statewide. The Programs will be staffed by healthcare workers, case managers, and/or peers and will provide a variety of essential wraparound services to address client needs. The Programs will provide a sterile and supervised space for people who use drugs to consume pre-purchased substances to prevent infectious disease transmission and fatal overdose.

According to the Maryland Department of Health, there were nearly 1,700 overdose deaths between December 2023 to November 2024 statewide.<sup>i</sup> **OIDPSP are proven to be effective and safe:** nearly 200 sites are operational in 14 countries.<sup>ii</sup> Since launching in November 2021, OnPoint, a multi-site OIDPSP in New York City, has reversed almost 1,700 overdoses. Having served 5,804 unique participants with over 171,000 total visits, OnPoint not only saves lives but is an access point for services. In its first year of operation alone, 75% of OnPoint participants accessed wrap-around services including but not limited to treatment, primary care, food access, housing, and employment.<sup>iii</sup>

Over 100 peer-reviewed studies have shown the positive impacts OIDPSP have on communities and those who use them.<sup>ii</sup> Saving lives with naloxone (also known as “Narcan”) is one of the most immediate benefits. Studies also show an increase in access to and engagement in treatment, a reduction in HIV and Hepatitis C transmission rates, a reduction in the amount and frequency clients use drugs, cost savings for medical systems, cost savings for local government through reduced emergency medical services (EMS) calls for service, and a reduction in syringe litter and/or other drug paraphernalia in surrounding communities.<sup>ii</sup>

Overdose deaths are preventable. OIDPSP's can play a critical role in supporting a comprehensive response to combatting the opioid crisis. For these reasons, the BCA respectfully requests a **favorable** report on HB 845.

<sup>i</sup> Maryland Department of Health Data Office. (2024). Overdose Data Portal. Retrieved from <https://health.maryland.gov/dataoffice/Pages/mdh-dashboards.aspx>  
[https://health.maryland.gov/vsa/Documents/Overdose/2021\\_AnnualIntoxDeathReport.pdf](https://health.maryland.gov/vsa/Documents/Overdose/2021_AnnualIntoxDeathReport.pdf)

<sup>ii</sup> The Drug Policy Alliance. (n.d.). Overdose Prevention Centers. Retrieved from <https://drugpolicy.org/issues/supervised-consumption-services>

<sup>iii</sup> OnPoint NYC. (2021). About Us. Retrieved from <https://onpointnyc.org/>