



**Powell Recovery Center, Inc.
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February 21, 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,

Powell Recovery Center, Inc. is writing to express the strongest support for 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.

Powell Recovery Center has provided life-saving addiction and dual recovery treatment in Baltimore since 1994 to only public health clients. Powell provides immediate access to SUD treatment with 275 residential beds and withdrawal management. Each month in the city that we love, 75 to 90 people die from overdose - that is 2-3 people every day. These deaths can be averted with Overdose Prevention Sites.

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 support, 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 Powell Recovery Center, Inc. or this position, please contact Kim Wireman, LCSW-C, LCADC at kwireman@prcinc.org.

Sincerely,

Kim Wireman

Kim Wireman, LCSW-C, LCADC
President/CEO