



**Daniel Carl Torsch
Foundation**

New day. New beginning.

February 24, 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,

I am the Director of the Daniel Carl Torsch Foundation and writing to strongly 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 especially in Baltimore City and Baltimore County which is exactly where we provide health centered harm reduction services.

My son Dan, died from an overdose in 2010 and so after we started Maryland’s first grief support group specifically for families that lost loved ones to addiction. I have met hundreds of parents whose adult children were found dead in a park, abandoned buildings and in cars and most with the most horrendous stories. One that stands out is from a mother whose daughter was found in Patterson Park and her face had been sliced up. This occurred after her death, confirmed by the medical examiner. Had there been a safe place to be able to refer an individual to, these deaths may not have occurred. This is in addition that a safe overdose prevention site would be another opportunity to engage with individuals to discuss treatment options and an added level of community protection.

. 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.**

Please feel free to contact me for further information.

Sincerely,

Toni Torsch, Director
Daniel Carl Torsch Foundation
www.dctfoundationinc.org
dctfoundationinc@gmail.com
443-554-6150