

January 29, 2025

The Honorable William C. (Will) Smith, JR., Esq.
Chairman, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 2 East Wing
11 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SUPPORT of Senate Bill 370: (Criminal Law - Drug Paraphernalia for Administration - Decriminalization) - FAVORABLE

Dear Chair Smith and Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee Members,

I, Elizabeth Spradley, support Senate Bill 370 which will revise existing criminal law to remove items that could be used to consume drugs from what is considered drug paraphernalia, effectively decriminalizing possession of those items.

I am a nurse who has worked in Baltimore City for the last 14 years providing care for people who use drugs. For the last two years, I have been at MDH Office of Harm Reduction working with our amazing harm reduction programs across the state including our syringe service programs (SSPs) where these supplies in question are distributed to those who need them. The operation and utilization of SSPs has been invaluable to many including healthcare providers like myself. We learn crucial information about the unregulated drug supply and emerging trends from these spaces that informs care inside OTPs, treatment centers, clinics, and emergency departments.

Decriminalizing drug paraphernalia is needed for us to stop how disruptive and fear-inducing criminalization of these supplies can be. People should be allowed to utilize safer, evidence-based administration practices without being seen as a threat to society. The current Maryland SSP statute has mixed interpretations by state authorities leading to vague and splintered discussions on its efficacy, decriminalizing drug paraphernalia will strengthen the SSP statute by allowing for clearer guidance to those enforcing laws and protections for those providing and using these supplies.

I believe that this bill will simplify Maryland's paraphernalia laws and clarify that possession of harm reduction supplies to prevent infectious disease is not a crime. **I ask that the Senate Judiciary Committee give SB370 a favorable report.**

For more information about my position, please contact Elizabeth Spradley at elizabeth.spradley@som.umaryland.edu.

Thank you for your time, Elizabeth Spradley RN BSN