

March 4, 2026



The Honorable Pamela Beidle  
Chair, Senate Finance Committee  
3 East Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**RE: SUPPORT for Senate Bill 878**  
***Health Facilities - Certified Recovery Residences - Unannounced Inspections***

Dear Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes, and Senate Finance Committee Members,

The Baltimore Harm Reduction Coalition (BHRC) writes to express our **support** for **Senate Bill 878** - Health Facilities - Certified Recovery Residences - Unannounced Inspections. Certified recovery residences are a key part in Maryland's behavioral health landscape, occupying a critical space between acute treatment and long-term stability. For many Marylanders, these recovery homes provide community-based support during an especially vulnerable period. However, recovery housing is only effective when quality standards are enforced with meaningful oversight. SB 878 strengthens the Maryland Department of Health's authority and responsibility to ensure certified residences operate safely and as intended.

BHRC is an overdose response program and one of 29 MDH-authorized syringe service programs in Maryland. Through street outreach in partnership with local churches, we provide survival supplies and connect people actively using drugs to stabilizing care. Many of our participants have entered recovery housing as a significant step toward improving their quality of life. While drug use and homelessness are distinct issues, they often intersect.<sup>1</sup> Housing instability can exacerbate chaotic substance use and substance use can increase vulnerability to homelessness. In this context, recovery residences can play an important stabilizing role, but only if they provide safe, equitable, and consistent care.

Despite current oversight structures, we continue to hear concerns from participants about conditions in some certified recovery residences, including: **chronic overcrowding, lack of adequate sleeping accommodations (including residences without beds), inconsistent or selective enforcement of house rules, and discriminatory treatment based on race, gender identity, and sexual orientation.** Residents are often reluctant to report these issues due to fear of retaliation while trying to maintain stability. Strong state oversight is essential as certified recovery residences are regulated by the Maryland Department of Health, rather than local jurisdictions. Unannounced inspections are particularly important to ensure sustained compliance with health and safety standards, rather than temporary adjustments.

People who use drugs and those entering recovery deserve safe, supportive, and accountable housing as they work towards a better quality of life. When someone takes a significant step toward recovery, our systems must meet that moment with integrity and care. SB 878 moves Maryland toward that standard. **For these reasons and more, BHRC respectfully urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 878.**

For more information about this position, please contact Darci Curwen-Garber, BHRC Policy Manager, at [darci@baltimoreharmreduction.org](mailto:darci@baltimoreharmreduction.org).

Sincerely,

The Baltimore Harm Reduction Coalition (BHRC)