



*MDDCSAM is the Maryland state chapter of the American Society of Addiction Medicine whose members are physicians and other health providers who treat people with substance use disorders.*

SB 327 **SUPPORT** Drug Paraphernalia and Controlled Paraphernalia Prohibitions– Repeal  
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee. February 5,2026

**The state of Maryland distributes drug paraphernalia (syringes & other supplies)** as a key component of Syringe Service Programs (SSPs) **which reduce overdose deaths**, lead to treatment referrals, along with other benefits. Maryland administers, regulates, and supports 22 active SSPs across most Maryland subdivisions.

**Ironically, many Marylanders are arrested and charged for possession of the same paraphernalia they received from the state.** (Individuals are only protected from arrest if they can prove they obtained these materials from an SSP; which they are typically unable to do).

**There is a plethora of publications in the peer-reviewed medical literature demonstrating the effectiveness of decriminalization of paraphernalia and calling for wider adoption.** These include articles that studied increased litter, crime, or drug initiation. I have been unable to find any peer-reviewed publications to the contrary.

**Decriminalizing drug paraphernalia was identified as one of the "priorities for action" for addressing the overdose crisis** according to a 2023 report in The Milbank Quarterly. **(1)**  
Many non-academic organizations are also calling for paraphernalia decrim. **(2)**

Maryland law allows for the “sale of needles and syringes or other paraphernalia” by pharmacies without a prescription to patients “showing proper identification and indication of need.” (Md. Code Regs. 10.13.08.01) **It is not appropriate to allow their legal sale, but not their legal possession.**

Respectfully,

Joseph Adams, MD, FASAM, addiction & internal medicine; Co-Chair, Public Policy Committee, MDDCSAM

## REFERENCES

**(1)** Cerda M, et al. The Future of the United States Overdose Crisis: Challenges and Opportunities Milbank Q. 2023 Feb 22;101(Suppl 1):478–506.

**(2)** AMERSA "supports the decriminalization of drug and paraphernalia possession for personal use for all currently illicit drugs and all associated equipment." (2025) AMERSA is a non-profit professional organization, founded in 1976, whose mission is to improve health and well-being through interdisciplinary leadership in substance use education, research, clinical care and policy. As reported in Hill K, et al. In Support of the Decriminalization of Personal Drug and Paraphernalia Use and Possession: Position Statement of AMERSA, Inc (Association for Multidisciplinary Education, Research, Substance Use and Addiction) Subst Use Addctn J. 2025 Jan;46(1):4-12