

Bill Number: HB 519**Recommended Position: Support****Title:** Public Health – Overdose and Infectious Disease Prevention Safer Drug Consumption Facility Program**Issue area:** Health**Lead Sponsors:** Delegate Morhaim**House Cosponsors:** Anderson, Barve, Fraser-Hidalgo, Frick, Gutierrez, Hettleman, Lierman, A. Miller, Moon, Robinson, Tarlau, Turner and K. Young**Senate Cosponsors:** N/A**Summary:**

HB 519 would create an Overdose and Infectious Disease Prevention Safer Drug Consumption Facility Program. Community-based organizations would then submit an application to administer the program to the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene or a local health department.

Reason for the Bill:

This bill provides places for individuals to use drugs in a safe environment with the ultimate goal of saving lives and promoting safe drug use. There are 100 similar safe drug use programs in 66 cities across the world including in Europe, Australia and Canada. Washington is the first state to move forward with the programs.

Legislative History:

2016 Unfavorable report by Health and Government Operations; withdrawn
1/27/2017 First reading Health and Government Operations; committee hearing 2/21

Support:

- University of Maryland School of Medicine
- Bloomberg School of Health at Johns Hopkins
- Center for Mental Health and Addition Policy Research at Johns Hopkins

Opposition:

- Maryland Association for Justice (trial lawyers)

Strategic Considerations:

Safe consumption remains a relatively new concept across the country and challenges the way we think about drug use. Many believe it condones substance abuse. Overcoming these stances makes bill passage difficult. The agency must also consider whether it could have an impact in our fundraising efforts.

Why Health Care for the Homeless should support this bill:

Safe consumption facilities have been proven to reduce spread of disease and to improve the overall health of drug users. Health Care for the Homeless supports initiatives that redefine the way we treat drug use and that also make the health and safety of the user the number one priority.