

**House Bill 396**  
**Health and Government Operations Committee**  
**(Public Health - Overdose and Infectious Disease Prevention Services Program)**

**FAVORABLE**

Greetings Chair Pendergrass, Vice Chair Peña-Melnyk and honorable Committee Members,

On behalf of our clients, staff and beloved community, I am writing to express that Charm City Care Connection is in support of House Bill 369 and the authorization of Overdose Prevention Sites (OPS) in Maryland. We have lost too many loved ones and community members to overdose, and can put a stop to this.

In 1994, the Baltimore City Health Dept. responded to increasing rates of transmission of infections such as Hepatitis C and HIV by becoming the first city administration in the US to implement syringe exchange programs. We can continue this legacy of setting life-saving precedents in response to public health crises by becoming the first city in the United States to authorize and operate Overdose Prevention Sites.

Though the crisis is heightened in the city, we know that communities are struggling with the opioid epidemic all across the state. Furthermore, because of the 1994 precedent, there are already several organizations and agencies which are fully equipped and ready to create OPS as additions to their existing programs. These organizations, including Charm City Care Connection (CCCC), are well established within the communities they serve and have done the prerequisite work of forming long-term relationships with people most impacted by substance use disorder and the racist War on Drugs. By treating our folks with dignity and respect we have been able to

There has been overwhelming support at all levels of power, from neighborhood residents to state legislators, for the creation of OPS through Maryland. We at CCCC are in full support of HB 396 and are ready to take on the task of creating Overdose Prevention Sites in the neighborhood we serve. This is a huge opportunity to transform our communities into healthy, thriving space. It is also **a matter of justice, equity and health**. We hope you all will make the right decision for the people and give HB 396 a favorable vote. We are thankful to Delegate Peña-Melnyk for sponsoring this bill and leading the way toward legislation that heals instead of harms.

Thank you,

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