



October 28, 2015

The Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council
Room 409, City Hall
100 North Holliday Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Re: City Council Bill 15-0254R – Implementing Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion in Baltimore

Dear President and City Council Members:

The Office of the State's Attorney has reviewed City Council Bill 15-0254R and offers its full support of this resolution. City Council Bill 15-0254R supports the expansion of the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) program nationwide and requests that law enforcement and other stakeholders appear before the City Council to discuss how the LEAD program could be implemented in Baltimore, what partnerships and structures need to be put in place to allow LEAD to succeed, and how to provide it with the necessary human and financial resources.

Drug addiction and incarceration overlap frequently in Baltimore creating an expensive, dangerous and potentially fatal cycle. The lack of support for addiction in prison is evidenced by the fact that individuals recently released from jail account for a third of all admissions to drug treatment programs in the City. According to the Justice Policy Institute, incarcerating addicted individuals costs more than \$37,000 per year compared to less than \$5,000 for a drug treatment program. The LEAD program will divert certain low-level drug offenders from arrest, booking and prosecution. Instead of arresting and booking these offenders, an outreach and case management team working for a social services provider assesses participants and designs Individual Intervention Plans that address factors driving the participants to engage in drug activity. LEAD resources are used to reduce the harm of drug-involved behavior to the participants and to the community. The LEAD program has been successfully implemented in several cities including Seattle, Washington and Santa Fe, New Mexico.

The Office of the State's Attorney for Baltimore City makes criminal charging decisions, in addition to pretrial release and sentencing recommendations. Therefore, the Office would serve an important role in planning and implementing a LEAD program. The Office supports the expansion of pre-booking diversion to increase community safety and looks forward to collaborating with all City stakeholders involved in the LEAD program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lisa Smith".

Lisa Smith

Director of Policy & Legislative Affairs, Office of the State's Attorney

Cc: Marilyn Mosby, State's Attorney
Angela C. Gibson, Mayor's Legislative Liaison

*F w/
Comm*

