

Baltimore City Council HET Committee Investigating Hearing - Developing a Coordinated Response to Baltimore City's Overdose Crisis

November 17th, 2021

Director of Mobilization Rajani Gudlavalleti (she/her)



Baltimore Harm Reduction Coalition

Baltimore Harm Reduction Coalition mobilizes community members for the health, dignity, and safety of people targeted by the war on drugs and anti-sex worker policies. We advocate for harm reduction as part of a broader movement for social justice.

Our three areas of work:

1. Policy Advocacy
2. Direct Services
3. Public Education



Our Work With Baltimore City

BCHD Overdose Intervention Team

Syringe Service Program Collaboration

Mayoral Transition Team

****Several strategic planning bodies with MDH***





Members

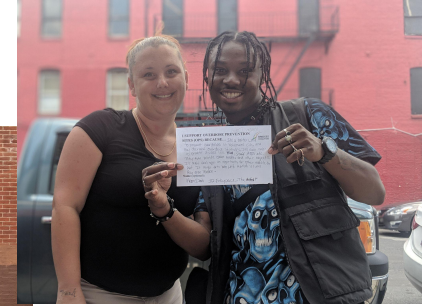
[American Civil Liberties Union – Maryland](#) | [Baltimore Harm Reduction Coalition](#) | [Bmore POWER](#) | [Baltimore Psychedelic Society](#) | [Baltimore Safe Haven](#) | [Behavioral Health System Baltimore](#) | [Charm City Care Connection](#) | [Chase Brexton Healthcare](#) | [DC Dance Safe](#) | [Drug Policy Alliance](#) | [GBDSA](#) | [HIPS](#) | [Health Care for the Homeless](#) | [IBR REACH](#) | [Law Enforcement Action Partnership](#) | [Maryland Communities United](#) | [Maryland Peer Advisory Council](#) | [National Council on Drug Dependency and Alcoholism](#) | [North Ave Mission](#) | [Nurses for Justice – Baltimore](#) | [Open Society Institute–Baltimore](#) | [Organization of Hope](#) | [PIVOT Program](#) | [Powell Recovery Center](#) | [Power Inside](#) | [Progressive Maryland](#) | [The Ancestor Project](#) | [Red Shed Village](#) | [SPARC Women’s Center](#) | [SWOP Baltimore](#) | [Voices of Hope for Maryland](#) | [Youth Empowered Society: YES Drop-in Center](#)

What Our Work Has Taught Us

**Community, Community,
Community**

Relationships & Trust Building

Everybody deserves a safe space



Adding the New to the Old

Our community-based SSP's provide everything that people need...except for a reliable, safe space to use.

Over the last 30+ years, no one has died in an Overdose Prevention Site.

OPS could work with already existing programs and providers.



What are OPS to the BRIDGES community?

OPS are indoor spaces where individuals can consume their own drugs in the presence of trained professionals (inc. people who use drugs) with immediate access to life-saving interventions, medical care, emotional support, and non-judgmental therapeutic relationships.



***OPS are not “the solution.” OPS do not “replace” treatment services.
OPS ARE A CRISIS INTERVENTION
OPS are positioned within the continuum of care to reduce overdose rates***

MD OPS Bill History




 House HGO Cmte by
Del. Morhaim with
no co-sponsors

2016 (YR 1)

 House HGO Cmte by
Del. Morhaim with
13 co-sponsors


BRIDGES Coalition is founded to
mobilize communities for OPS

2017 (YR 2)

 House HGO Cmte by
Del. Morhaim with
30 co-sponsors


Senate Finance Cmte by
Sen. Feldman with
Sen. Mathias as the 1 co-sponsor

2018 (YR 3)

 House HGO Cmte by
Del. Pena-Melnyk with
31 co-sponsors

Senate Finance Cmte by
Sen. Feldman with
9 co-sponsors

2019 (YR 4)

 House HGO Cmte by
Del. Hettlman with
41 co-sponsors

Senate Finance Cmte by
Sen. Hettleman* with
7 co-sponsors

2020 (YR 5)

Yet again, the bill to authorize OPS
did not move out of committee.
We will not stop.
Sen Hettleman, Del Pena-Melnyk,
Mayor Brandon Scott, & dozens of
more are on board for 2023.
Join the movement.

2021 (YR 6)



How can we work together

BRIDGES members are practiced in hard, controversial, emotional dialogue

- Invite us for dialogues with the constituent groups you know will have concerns -- CAs, specific leaders, etc.

Publicly document your support for OPS to legally operate in Baltimore City

- City resolution, request for state action, media, etc.



Contact Information

Instagram/Facebook/Twitter: @bridges4ops

Website: www.bridges4ops.org

Email: admin@baltimoreharmreduction.org

Video testimonials: tinyurl.com/BRIDGESTube

