


F R O M	Name & Title	Dr. Leana Wen, Commissioner <i>Leana Wen</i>	Health Department	
	Agency Name & Address	Health Department 1001 E. Fayette Street Baltimore, Maryland 21201	MEMO	
	Subject	Council Bill 15-0275R – “There’s a Better Way” to Assist Homeless		

To: President and Members
of the City Council
c/o 409 City Hall

June 17, 2016

The Baltimore City Health Department (BCHD) is pleased to have the opportunity to review Council Bill 15-0275R – “There’s a Better Way” to Assist Homeless. The purpose of this bill is to examine how Baltimore City can incorporate elements of Albuquerque, New Mexico’s “There’s a Better Way” program to assist homeless in the City’s efforts to make homelessness a rare and brief experience in Baltimore.

The Health Department is committed to providing all of our homeless citizens with quality health care services. Through our Community Risk Reduction Services we can provide clinical care to Homeless residents on demand. Our services occur in primarily three areas: naloxone training and prescribing, HIV and syphilis testing and distribution of information on available homeless services within the City.

The Health Department also works with our Partners at Behavioral Health System Baltimore and various other public and private entities to support and provide a wide range of services to our homeless population including: mobile outreach, case management, and supportive services for individuals with severe and persistent mental illness; assessments, screenings and referrals for homeless individuals; and low barrier temporary housing interventions.

Albuquerque, New Mexico’s “There’s a Better Way” program provides an innovative new approach to homeless services. By providing opportunities to work and earn a wage, as well as, connecting individuals directly with support services, the program may provide the infrastructure to allow individuals to better their situation and find permanent housing. Measuring the impact of the program in Albuquerque is essential to guide its potential implementation in Baltimore. The Health Department advocates for evidenced based approaches to respond to public health issues and the lessons learned in the existing program can inform our work in Baltimore.

The Health Department supports this resolution and appreciates the opportunity to discuss this important issue. We will be present at the hearing to answer any questions the Council may have on this matter.

cc: Angela Gibson, Office of the Mayor
Andrew Nicklas, Director of Legislative Affairs, Department of Health

