

FROM	NAME & TITLE	Niles R. Ford, PhD, Chief of Fire Department <i>NRF</i> Baltimore City Fire Department	CITY of BALTIMORE MEMO	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	401 East Fayette St. 21202		
	SUBJECT	City Council Bill #20-0188R Informational Hearing – Syringe Service Expansion		

TO

The Honorable Brandon M. Scott, President
And All Members of the Baltimore City Council
City Hall, Room 408

DATE: February 4, 2020

FOR the purpose of inviting representatives from the Health Department, the Baltimore Police Department, the Fire Department, the Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice, and the Law Department to explain the status of syringe service programs in the City and the state

BCFD reviewed Council Bill 20-0188R (Syringe Service Expansion), and has the following comments:

Pros:

- Reducing the risk of shared contaminated needles
- Free HIV testing and counseling, to help reduce the spread of HIV and Hepatitis C
- Reducing the risk of law enforcement officers and other public safety personnel becoming infected by accidental needle sticks
- Some programs will also assist those seeking help for a substance abuse problem to get into treatment programs, support groups or other local services

Cons:

- The programs may be considered as promoting the use of illegal substances by offering needles to help a person use
- The apparent “acceptance” of IV drug use may lead to higher rates of drug abuse
- Some reports indicate that the HIV rate increases as a result of needle exchange programs

BCFD’s Position:

Needle exchange programs have been working throughout the City for a number of years. They promote improving the public health of our visitors and residents while reducing HIV and Hepatitis C and the sharing of needles. They also offer access to substance abuse counseling and treatment services if requested. We would recommend supporting this proposal.