

Maksymowicz Ann  
Cumberland  
LD 1159

Dear Senate Chair Joe Baldacci, House Chair Michele Meyer, and esteemed members of the Health and Human Services Committee-

I am writing in support of LD 1159 - An Act to Establish a Pilot Project Regarding Harm Reduction Health Centers. I am a trained clinical social worker and I have previously worked in a harm reduction drop in center in Chicago.

Just like so many things in our society, substance use interventions exist on a continuum and harm reduction programs serve people at any and all intensity of their substance use. Supervised substance use harm reduction sites are imperative to responding to the epidemic we are experiencing regarding opiate overdoses. It allows people to be met without judgement and engage in conversation about their use and other stressors they are experiencing.

They allow for drug testing so that someone knows what they are putting in their body. This is especially necessary as Xylazine, also known as "Tranq," begins to spread as an additive to drugs being marketed as heroin and fentanyl. Tranq does not respond to Naloxone since it isn't an opiate, and it can result in terrible necrotic wounds which can require amputation.

People who use illicit substances cannot reduce the risk of their behaviors if they die by overdose or are rejected from traditional treatment centers that require strict abstinence. We need options available to reach everyone who uses substances, no one is disposable or expendable.

Thank you for considering my testimony as this process moves forward.