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To: Representative Wood, Chair
House Committee on Human Services

From: Lauren Jandl, Chief of Staff, prepared on behalf of Attorney General Clark
Attorney General's Office

Date: April 27, 2023

Re: H.72, An act relating to a harm-reduction criminal justice response to drug use

All of us in Vermont have been touched in some way by the opioids crisis. The steady rise in overdose deaths, in particular, is shocking and devastating. I support the use of harm-reduction measures to address this crisis, and I applaud the Legislature for taking steps toward action on this issue.

An overdose prevention site has the potential to save lives and foster steps to treatment and recovery. For that reason, I am supportive of the concept. In my view, to be successful, an overdose prevention site must have several elements in place. Once Vermont is assured that the federal government will not prosecute those involved in an overdose prevention site; the wrap-around services (such as treatment and counseling) are in place to support those who utilize the site; and an experienced community partner is identified who is willing and able to take the lead, then it would be possible to move forward should a locality wish to do so.

I recognize that there are many complexities and questions that surround the creation of an overdose prevention site, and I look forward to having a seat at the table.