



3/1/2024

Members of the Vermont Legislature;

I am writing to you as the Nurse Practitioner and Principal of the Johnson Health Center, a facility deeply committed to the well-being and safety of our community. In light of the ongoing public health crisis posed by drug overdoses, I feel compelled to express my unwavering support for Overdose Prevention Centers (OPCs) as a critical component of a comprehensive continuum of services that is essential to save lives and foster a healthier society.

The establishment and operation of OPCs are pivotal in our collective efforts to mitigate the devastating impact of drug-related harm. These centers provide a safe and supervised environment for individuals to use substances, significantly reducing the risk of fatal overdoses. More importantly, OPCs serve as vital access points to health and social services, including substance use disorder treatment, mental health support, and other critical healthcare services.

Our experience at the Johnson Health Center underscores the necessity of integrating OPCs into our healthcare delivery system. We have witnessed firsthand the benefits of harm reduction strategies in saving lives and facilitating the engagement of vulnerable populations with essential healthcare services. OPCs are not only about preventing overdoses; they embody a compassionate and pragmatic approach to public health that respects human dignity and acknowledges the complexity of substance use disorders.

As a Nurse Practitioner, I have seen the consequences of untreated addiction and the barriers many individuals face in accessing the care they need. OPCs play a crucial role in breaking down these barriers, offering a nonjudgmental space that encourages individuals to seek help. It is a matter of safety and humanity to support these centers, as they are part of a continuum of care that keeps people alive and paves the way for a safer existence..

I urge you to consider the evidence supporting the effectiveness of OPCs and to recognize their value as an integral part of our healthcare system. By investing in and supporting OPCs, we are taking a significant step towards a safer, healthier, and more compassionate community.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I am available to discuss further and provide additional information on the positive impact of OPCs on public health and safety. Together, we can make a difference in the lives of many who are at risk of drug-related harm.

Sincerely,
Caroline Butler, NP-C