



January 10, 2024

Dear Members of the VT legislature,

We write today in ardent support of H.72 which along with other important policy changes proposes to eliminate criminal and civil penalties for operation of a safer drug consumption program.

Hundreds of Vermonters have needlessly died a preventable death. It is time to look at the evidence and show up for our neighbors who are still at incredibly high risk.

We want to share a quote from the **European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction:**

"The benefits of providing [OPCs] may include improvements in safe, hygienic drug use, especially among regular clients, increased access to health and social services, and reduced public drug use and associated nuisance. There is no evidence to suggest that the availability of OPCs increases drug use or frequency of injecting. [Overdose prevention centers] facilitate rather than delay treatment entry and do not result in higher rates of local drug-related crime."

We know we can create a different future for our neighbors who are suffering. A future where we look people in the eyes and say: "It's okay! We got you! You deserve to live! Here is a safer space for you!"

We know that Opioid Prevention Centers are not a magic fix-it-all solution. They won't solve our opioid crisis alone and therefore must be coupled with other important policy changes to successfully address a crisis of this magnitude. However, we must address it. We must be courageous and follow the evidence. We can't afford to wait any longer. It is time to fund and create a legal path forward to operating Overdose Prevention Centers in Vermont — now. We urge you to give all humans a chance at life and therefore vote yes on H.72.

Will Eberle,
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