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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2021

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A N A C T

RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY - HARM REDUCTION CENTER ADVISORY
COMMITTEE AND PILOT PROGRAM

Introduced By: Representatives Edwards, Caldwell, Kazarian, Slater, Potter, and Kislak

Date Introduced: January 29, 2021

Referred To: House Health & Human Services

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Title 23 of the General Laws entitled "HEALTH AND SAFETY" is hereby
2 amended by adding thereto the following chapter:

3 CHAPTER 12.10

4 HARM REDUCTION CENTER ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND PILOT PROGRAM

5 **23-12.10-1. Purpose and creation.**

6 (a) The purpose of this chapter is to authorize a pilot program to prevent drug overdoses
7 through the establishment of harm reduction centers, which are locations where persons may safely
8 consume pre-obtained controlled substances.

9 (b) Each harm reduction center shall provide the necessary health care professionals to
10 prevent overdose, and shall provide referrals for counseling or other medical treatment that may be
11 appropriate for persons utilizing the harm reduction center.

12 (c) The director of the department of health shall promulgate regulations to authorize the
13 program established by this section. Nothing contained in this section authorizes a harm reduction
14 center without approval of the municipality in which the center is proposed.

15 **23-12.10-2. Establishment of advisory committee.**

16 There is hereby established an advisory committee to advise the director of the department
17 of health with respect to the regulations necessary to effectuate the purpose of this chapter. The
18 advisory committee shall be chaired by the director of the department of health, or the director

1 designee, and consist of nine (9) additional members: one of whom shall be the attorney general or
2 designee; one member from the Rhode Island Medical Society; one member from the Hospital
3 Association of Rhode Island; one member from the Rhode Island chapter of the American Society
4 of Addiction Medicine; and five (5) members approved by the governor, one of whom shall be a
5 person with a substance abuse disorder; one of whom shall be a person working in overdose
6 prevention; one of whom shall be a current or former law enforcement official; one of whom shall
7 be a representative of the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns; and one of whom shall be a
8 family member of a person who suffered a fatal drug overdose.

9 **23-12.10-3. Role of advisory committee.**

10 (a) The advisory committee shall make recommendations to the director of the department
11 of health with respect to the following:

12 (1) Maximizing the potential public health and safety benefits of harm reduction centers;

13 (2) The proper disposal of hypodermic needles and syringes;

14 (3) The recovery of persons utilizing such harm reduction centers;

15 (4) Federal, state and local laws impacting the creation and operation of the harm reduction
16 centers;

17 (5) Appropriate guidance to relevant professional licensing boards;

18 (6) Potential collaboration with other public health efforts;

19 (7) Consideration of any other factors beneficial to promoting the public health and safety;

20 and

21 (8) Liability protection for property owners, harm reduction staff, and volunteers and
22 participants, from criminal or civil liability resulting from the operation of a harm reduction center.

23 **23-12.10-4. Promulgation of regulations.**

24 The director of the department of health shall promulgate regulations authorized by this
25 chapter no later than January 1, 2022, and such regulations shall be transmitted to the general
26 assembly.

27 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

A N A C T

RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY - HARM REDUCTION CENTER ADVISORY
COMMITTEE AND PILOT PROGRAM

1 This act would create a pilot program to establish harm reduction centers, facilities wherein
2 persons may use pre-obtained controlled substances under the supervision of health care
3 professionals. The director of the department of health, with the advice of an advisory committee,
4 would promulgate regulations on or before January 1, 2022 with respect to this act.

5 This act would take effect upon passage.

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