

# State legislators hold hearing on bringing safe injection sites to Massachusetts

State legislators held a joint hearing today in Boston on bringing safe injection sites to Massachusetts. House Bill 1712 (H1712), refers to the sites as “harm reduction sites” with the goal of preventing fatal overdoses.

Per the bill, “A person with a substance use disorder may consume pre-obtained controlled substances and medical assistance by health care professionals is made immediately available to such a person as necessary to prevent fatal overdose. Harm reduction sites shall make counseling, referrals to treatment and other appropriate services available for persons utilizing such sites to access on a voluntary basis. The department shall require that any site authorized under this pilot program first obtain approval from the board of health in the city or town in which the pilot site is located.”

In 2018, U.S. Attorney Andrew Lelling, the top federal prosecutor in Massachusetts, has already gone on record to oppose safe injection sites and has stated he would prosecute the employees and users:

*“Supervised injection facilities” would violate federal laws prohibiting the use of illicit drugs and the operation of sites where illicit drugs are used and distributed. Employees and users of such a site would be exposed to federal criminal charges regardless of any state law or study.*

“I cannot envision any scenario in which sites that normalize intravenous use of heroin and fentanyl would be off limits to

federal law enforcement efforts.

Heroin use fuels a deadly drug trade that is ravaging our state and the region, and my office is keenly focused on curbing the opioid and heroin epidemic. Providing a sanctuary to accommodate risky and lethal illegal drug use undermines all of the hard work of treatment providers and law enforcement across the Commonwealth.

The opioid epidemic requires that we remain laser-focused on prevention, treatment, and enforcement – not the normalization of intravenous use of heroin and fentanyl.”

Full text of the House bill:

H1712