



VERMONT LEGISLATIVE
Joint Fiscal Office

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Fiscal Note

May 14, 2024

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

As Passed by the General Assembly

Bill Summary

This bill proposes several provisions relating to harm-reduction and criminal justice responses to drug use. The following sections of the bill would have fiscal impacts:

Section 2 – Pilot Program; Overdose Prevention Centers

Sec. 2 would appropriate \$1,100,000 in fiscal year 2025 from Opioid Abatement Special Fund to the Department of Health (VDH) for the purpose of awarding grants to the City of Burlington for establishing an overdose prevention center upon submission of a grant proposal that has been approved by the Burlington City Council. The bill also includes intent language for the General Assembly to continue to appropriate funds from the Fund through fiscal year 2028 for the purpose of awarding grants to the City for the operation of the pilot program.

Sections 3 and 4 – Study and Appropriation

Sec. 3 would require that VDH contract with a researcher or independent consulting entity with expertise in the field of rural addiction or overdose prevention centers, or both, to study the impact of the overdose prevention center pilot program authorized in Sec. 2. The study would evaluate the current impacts of the overdose crisis in Vermont, as well as any changes up to four years following the implementation of the overdose prevention center pilot programs. In addition to interim annual reports, VDH would submit a final report with the results of the study and recommendations to the General Assembly on or before January 15, 2029.

Sec. 4 would appropriate \$300,000 to VDH from the Opioid Abatement Special Fund for the purpose of funding the study required by Sec. 2.

Fiscal Impacts

The bill would appropriate the following amounts to VDH from the Opioid Abatement Fund in fiscal year 2025.

- \$1.1 million for a grant to the City of Burlington for establishing an overdose prevention center.
- \$300,000 for VDH for a contract to study the impacts of the overdose prevention center pilot program.