

RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL

No. 49

Approved February 9, 2024

WHEREAS, Legislation authorizing the establishment of a Harm Reduction Center in Rhode Island was passed by the Rhode Island General Assembly in 2021; and

WHEREAS, In 2022, 434 Rhode Islanders lost their lives due to accidental drug overdoses; and

WHEREAS, Each person who tragically passed is a friend, neighbor or family member, with nearly everyone in our state being directly or indirectly impacted by this crisis; and

WHEREAS, Harm Reduction Centers, also known as “safe consumption sites” or “overdose prevention centers” provide a range of services all in one location. These services include access to basic needs such as food, water and hygiene products; safer use supplies and Narcan/naloxone; case management services, HIV and hepatitis C testing and linkage to care; housing support, and peer recovery coaching among other services; and

WHEREAS, Project Weber/RENEW and clinical partner VICTA have secured a location for the nation’s first state-regulated Harm Reduction Center at 45 Willard Avenue next to the Rhode Island Hospital Campus; and

WHEREAS, Project Weber/RENEW has over 15 years of experience providing peer-led harm reduction and recovery support services, building relationships with the people it serves, and fighting for systematic change; and

WHEREAS, In 2023, Project Weber/RENEW served 6,000 individuals in more than 22,000 encounters; and

WHEREAS, VICTA is a fully integrated healthcare center offering a continuum of services in its flagship Providence office. In addition to prescribing and dispensing medications for the treatment of opioid and alcohol use disorders, VICTA offers outpatient counseling for substance use, mental health, and trauma-related disorders; and

WHEREAS, Since opening their flagship office in March 2019, VICTA has served nearly 3,500 clients with an interdisciplinary team of medical and substance abuse professionals; and

WHEREAS, The Rhode Island Department of Health will regulate and oversee all operations of the Harm Reduction Center located at 45 Willard Avenue; and

WHEREAS, Pursuant to § 23-12.10-1 of the General Laws of the State of Rhode Island, any harm reduction center proposed to be operated shall require municipal authorization and approval by way of affirmative vote by the city or town council, or equivalent body.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the City Council of the City of Providence, by way of affirmative vote, authorize Project Weber/RENEW and clinical partner VICTA to open and operate a Harm Reduction Center at 45 Willard Avenue, on Assessor’s Plat 46, Lot 97, to initially be allowed to open 9am-6pm, Monday through Friday.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That, upon passage, copies of this resolution be sent to the Mayor of Providence, the Chairperson of the Project Weber/RENEW Board of Directors, the CEO of VICTA, Rhode Island State Senator Joshua Miller and Rhode Island State Representative John G. Edwards.


IN CITY COUNCIL

FEB 01 2024
READ AND PASSED


RACHEL M. MILLER, PRESIDENT

CLERK

I HEREBY APPROVE.



Mayor
Date: 2/9/2024