READERS RESPOND

Put drug treatment where the need is greatest

The Central Baltimore Partnership, a federation of more than 60 organizations dedicated to the renaissance of Central Baltimore, commends Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake for forming a task force that will spend the next nine months studying heroin and substance abuse in Baltimore while developing new ideas about how the city can better coordinate treatment options (“Mayor appoints task force to study heroin, substance abuse,” Oct. 14).

For the past year and a half, a CBP task force has been considering similar issues in the Central Baltimore area. Known as the Saturataion of Metropolitan Service Agencies (SMSA) task force, it was formed to address the high concentration of methadone clinics, drug treatment facilities and other social services providers located in the neighborhoods of Old Goucher, Charles North and Charles Village.

Our aim is to ameliorate the impact on quality-of-life issues through “good neighbor agreements” with local social services providers and to prevent further saturation. It is important to note that while we have opposed making Central Baltimore, or any other area of the city, a treatment magnet, the task force strongly supports offering services to neighborhood residents near where they live, which will improve treatment outcomes while strengthening communities.

We feel that a citywide approach, where treatment facilities were more evenly distributed throughout Baltimore, could be a great help in both reducing the impact on saturated areas, and providing better services to those in need. We look forward to giving voice to our perspective on the mayor’s new task force.

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