



**SYNOPSIS**

**Committee: Health, Environment, and Technology**

**City Council Resolution: 21-0071R**

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**Investigative Hearing - Developing a Coordinated Response to Baltimore City's Overdose Crisis**

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**Sponsor:** Councilmember McCray, et al

**Introduced:** October 4, 2021

**Purpose:**

For the purpose of requesting the Baltimore City Administrator, the Commissioner of the Baltimore City Health Department, the Commissioner of the Baltimore Police Department, the Chief of the Baltimore City Fire Department, the Director of the Mayor's Office of Performance and Innovation, the Director of the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement, the Director of the Mayor's Office of Emergency Management, and the Director of the Department of Finance to come before the Baltimore City Council to provide a comprehensive briefing on the City's coordinated response to the current overdose crisis; how we can develop and implement an Rx Stat workgroup with our local healthcare partners; the use of mobile safe injection sites; the allocation of funding to distribute fentanyl test strips; and an examination of the prevention, diversion, and rehabilitation programs we have in place to save lives.

**Effective:** Upon enactment

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**AGENCY REPORTS**

City Administrator	
Health Department	
Police Department	
Fire Department	No Objection
Mayor's Office of Performance and Innovation	
Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement	

Mayor's Office of Emergency Management	Favorable with Comments
Department of Finance	
City Solicitor	Favorable

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**ANALYSIS**

The resolution requests that the identified agencies and officials provide a comprehensive briefing to the City Council on the City's coordinated response to the current overdose crisis; how we can develop and implement an Rx Stat workgroup with local healthcare partners; the use of mobile safe injection sites; the allocation of funding to distribute fentanyl test strips; and an examination of the prevention, diversion, and rehabilitation programs the City has in place to save lives.

The epidemic of opioid overdose deaths in the United States has developed over decades and has been driven by prescription opioids, heroin, and most recently synthetic opioids—particularly fentanyl. The Baltimore City Health Department has adopted a three-pronged strategy for combatting the opioid crisis: (1) ensuring the availability of Naloxone, a drug that can reverse an opioid overdose before it becomes fatal, and training on how to administer it; (2) increasing access to on-demand, evidence-based treatment, such medication-assisted treatment that includes psychosocial support (like counseling) and wraparound social services; and (3) destigmatizing addiction and treatment.

Programs developed in other jurisdictions can also serve as models for expanding the City's efforts. New York City's Rx Stat program uses data from local, state, and federal government sources to create targeted interventions and policy responses to reduce deaths and illness involving misuse of prescription opioids and other drugs. Other cities are exploring mobile safe injection sites—converted vehicles that offer a safe space to consume drugs, as well as clean needles, trained staff with access to breathing masks and naloxone, and information about drug treatment and other health services. Some cities are also distributing free fentanyl test strips to help drug users protect themselves from fentanyl contaminated drugs.

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**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

**Fiscal Note:** None

**Information Source(s):** Centers for Disease Control, Reporting Agencies, Resolution 21-0070R



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