



Legislation Text

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The official copy considered by the City Council is the first reader copy.

Introductory*

City of Baltimore Council Bill R (Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmember McCray

A Resolution Entitled

A Council Resolution concerning

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

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.

Recitals

The opioid crisis is an epidemic plaguing the entire country, and Baltimore has not been immune to its devastating impacts. This epidemic knows no bounds: it impacts all communities regardless of race, gender, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender identity. Between 2013 and 2019, Baltimore City saw a 271% increase in fatal overdoses. In 2020, there were 1,028 intoxication-related deaths in our city. At least two people die each day from an opioid overdose.

According to the CDC, the emergence of the opioid epidemic has endured 3 phases. The first phase occurred in the 1990s with the rise of prescription opioid-related deaths. The second phase occurred during the early 2010s with heroin-related deaths. The phase we are currently in has been plagued by the emergence of fentanyl. According to the DEA, fentanyl is within 92% of all drugs being sold nationwide. The numbers are continually disheartening: 88.6% of all Baltimore City overdose deaths involved fentanyl in 2019.

In 2015, Baltimore City took crucial steps towards addressing the growing epidemic through former Mayor Rawlings-Blake's Heroin Treatment and Prevention Task Force Report. The cohort was able to study the root causes and implications surrounding heroin addiction in order to propose recommendations for improving access to effective treatments and neighborhood capability. During these pivotal meetings, the cohort examined relevant data, current access to care and practice standards, and neighborhoods. Their recommendations established the foundation for the development of the current, 3 pronged strategy the Baltimore City Health Department utilizes to combat the opioid crisis.

We know that addiction and overdoses are preventable, treatment exists, and recovery is possible. As we continue to improve our response strategies, we must evaluate the effectiveness of our current systems and our capacity to model programs implemented in similar jurisdictions that have proven successful. We must analyze strategies like New York City's Rx Stat program, Philadelphia's Mobile Safe Injection Sites, and citywide campaigns to distribute fentanyl test strips, and an examination of the prevention, diversion, and rehabilitation programs we have in place to save lives.

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the City Council of Baltimore, That the Baltimore City Council requests that 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 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.

And be it further resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to 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, the Director of the Department of Finance, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.