

CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 21-0071R
(First Reader)

Introduced by: Councilmembers McCray, Bullock, Middleton, Conway, Stokes, Burnett, Cohen, Ramos, Porter, Torrence

Introduced and read first time: October 4, 2021

Assigned to: Health, Environment, and Technology Committee

REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: City Solicitor, Department of Finance, Health Department, Fire Department, Office of Emergency Management, Baltimore Police Department, City Administrator, Mayor's Office of Performance and Innovation, Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

1 A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

2 **Investigative Hearing – Developing a Coordinated Response to**
3 **Baltimore City's Overdose Crisis**

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

15 **Recitals**

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

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

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS indicate matter added to existing law.
[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

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

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

16 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the
17 Baltimore City Council requests that the Baltimore City Administrator, the Commissioner of the
18 Baltimore City Health Department, the Commissioner of the Baltimore Police Department, the
19 Chief of the Baltimore City Fire Department, the Director of the Mayor's Office of Performance
20 and Innovation, the Director of the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement, the
21 Director of the Mayor's Office of Emergency Management, and the Director of the Department of
22 Finance come before the Baltimore City Council to provide a comprehensive briefing on the
23 City's coordinated response to the current overdose crisis; how we can develop and implement an
24 Rx Stat workgroup with our local healthcare partners; the use of mobile safe injection sites; the
25 allocation of funding to distribute fentanyl test strips; and an examination of the prevention,
26 diversion and rehabilitation programs we have in place to save lives.

27 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Baltimore City
28 Administrator, the Commissioner of the Baltimore City Health Department, the Commissioner of
29 the Baltimore Police Department, the Chief of the Baltimore City Fire Department, the Director
30 of the Mayor's Office of Performance and Innovation, the Director of the Mayor's Office of
31 Neighborhood Safety and Engagement, the Director of the Mayor's Office of Emergency
32 Management, the Director of the Department of Finance, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to
33 the City Council.