



BALTIMORE POLICE DEPARTMENT



Brandon M. Scott
Mayor

Michael S. Harrison
Police Commissioner

November 17, 2021

Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council
Room 400, City Hall
100 N. Holliday Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

**RE: City Council Resolution #21-0071R
Investigative Hearing – Developing a Coordinated Response to Baltimore City’s
Overdose Crisis**

Dear Council President Mosby and Members of City Council:

The Baltimore Police Department (BPD) has reviewed Council Resolution 21-0071R which is for the purpose of calling upon Baltimore City agencies 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.

Given the trauma that overdoses can inflict on the victim, their family and the community, it is the policy of the Baltimore Police Department (BPD) to provide the least intrusive and most effective police-involved response consistent with community safety and our community care-taking function by:

- ✓ Rendering aid to victims of suspected non-fatal overdose – including the use of NARCAN - and to provide referral information to community-based services for assistance away from the criminal justice system,
- ✓ Investigating patterns of suspected fatal overdose, and
- ✓ Working with city agencies and service providers to share data and ultimately develop an improved emergency medical system that can respond to incidents of suspected overdose without the involvement of law enforcement.

That said, the BPD is an important component of the Baltimore crisis and substance use disorder response system by responding to and de-escalating incidents that pose an imminent danger to community safety, and diverting individuals to community resources that provide appropriate services. The BPD maintains a collaborative relationship with the behavioral health care system, people with lived experience, and advocacy groups in order to develop, implement, and evaluate a comprehensive crisis response system that allows for the least police-involved response for individuals in crisis consistent with community safety.

Thank you for allowing us to comment on this important resolution. At the hearing, we will provide additional information about how we track information regarding overdoses and how we use that information within the crime fight.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michelle Wirzberger". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michelle Wirzberger, Esq.
Director of Government Affairs

cc: Natwana Austin, Executive Secretary of the Baltimore City Council
Natasha Mehu, Director of Mayor's Office of Government Relations
Nina Themalis, Special Assistant and Legislative Liaison, MOGR
Eric Melancon, BPD Chief of Staff
Andrew Smullian, BPD Deputy Chief of Staff