

**Councilman Al Austin
City Council Meeting
October 4, 2022
R-39: Fentanyl Outreach Plan
Frequently Asked Questions**

1. What makes Fentanyl so dangerous?

Fentanyl is a synthetic drug similar to morphine that is 50 to 100 times more potent. Although it can be prescribed, the drug is also made and used illegally; fentanyl is often combined with other drugs and pressed into pills that resemble prescription opioids, increasing risk for consumers. According to the CDC, synthetic opioids contributed to over 82% of all opioid-related deaths in 2020.

2. How does Long Beach's opioid overdose rate compare to other cities, Los Angeles County, and California?

In 2020, Long Beach had 9.2 opioid overdose deaths per 100,000 people, nearly double the 2019 rate of 4.8. Per the California Department of Public Health, Los Angeles County had a rate of 12.4 opioid overdose deaths per 100,000 people and California had a rate of 13.5 in 2020.

3. What resources does the City currently offer for preventing opioid overdose?

The Health Department currently has a webpage dedicated to information on preventing opioid abuse and overdose. The site contains a media campaign developed by the Los Angeles (LA) County Public Health Department, information from the CDC, opioid-related death rates for Long Beach, the phone number to the LA County Substance Abuse Service Helpline and more related content.

4. Why should an informational outreach plan about fentanyl and opioid overdose target high school students and their parents?

Per the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), fentanyl-related opioid overdose deaths among California youth aged 10-19 increased 625% from 2018 to 2020. On September 21, 2022, CDPH released an alert warning California schools of a new trend, brightly-colored fentanyl pills, or rainbow fentanyl. Given this news and the recent cluster of overdoses in LA County high schools, it is appropriate to equip students and their parents with the information necessary to make safe decisions.

5. Has a similar outreach campaign been done before by the Health Department?

A similar outreach campaign was requested in January of 2017 following the legalization of adult-use marijuana in Long Beach. The item called for the Health Department to work with various stakeholders like LBUSD, Long Beach City College, the Office of Traffic Safety, and marijuana business owners to develop an outreach and education campaign teaching local children about the consequences of youth marijuana use, educating drivers on the dangers of marijuana-impaired driving, and instructing parents on the significant role they play in effectively teaching their kids about marijuana safety. The Health Department's successes included hiring a Marijuana Education Program Coordinator, conducting a community assessment survey in partnership with Los Angeles County Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition, developing and distributing educational flyers and brochures, establishing a dedicated web page for the marijuana education program, and pursuing funding opportunities to support the campaign.