



Legislation Text

File #: 17-0917, **Version:** 1

Recommendation to request City Manager and Department of Health and Human Services to report back in 30 days on the feasibility, strategy, and potential benefits to conducting a public health detailing campaign on promoting judicious opioid prescribing among Long Beach doctors, and other applicable healthcare staff.

INTRODUCTION:

Opioid addiction and overdose is a growing problem nationwide, and Long Beach is unfortunately not immune to this pressing issue. This serious public health and safety problem has reached epidemic levels over the past few years. The number of opioid overdose deaths nationwide have been growing rapidly surpassing the number of deaths experienced at its peak by the H.I.V. crisis in 1995, the peak number of gun deaths in 1993, and peak car crash deaths in 1972. Opioid overdose deaths have surpassed 60,000 annual deaths.

Opioids include heroin and prescription pain-killers like morphine, codeine, oxycodone, methadone, fentanyl, Percocet, Demerol, and Vicodin. These prescribed pain-killers are a serious source of addiction. Since 2010 Long Beach is consistently seeing rates higher than Los Angeles County in prescription opioid related emergency room visits, hospitalization, mortality, and need for treatment. While illegal drug use is a pressing concern, prescription opioids are a significant factor in beginning and maintaining addictions.

This issue cannot just be addressed on the back-end with rehabilitation, and assistance to those who have become addicted, but must also be confronted at the front-end from legal medical prescriptions. Drug overdose is the leading cause of accidental death in the US. In 2015 there were 20,101 overdose deaths related to prescription pain relievers, and outnumbers the 12,990 overdose deaths related to heroin." People who become addicted to opioids are often first exposed as a result of prescriptions they received legally for an injury, or chronic pain. Often these symptoms can be managed through reduced reliance on opioid pain-killers like oxycodone, Percocet, Vicodin, Morphine, and Demerol. Not only do opioid prescriptions create an increased likelihood that these individuals become addicted from the exposure to opioids, but it also provides a source of left over prescription drugs that often end up being sold on the streets and contribute to addiction in our community as well as the crime that often fund an individual's addiction.

Cities, counties, and states throughout the country have begun implementing health detailing programs that allow local health departments to conduct brief one-on-one educational visits with doctors on options for limiting their prescription of opioids, reducing individual dosages

and number of pills prescribed, as well as identifying addiction. This approach is modeled after the pharmaceutical sales strategy, and has been used to facilitate change in clinical practices. Public health detailing programs are focused on specific clinical topics, emphasize a limited number of key messages, and offer tools, provider information, and patient education resources at the one-on-one visits. Opioid detailing campaigns have been successfully applied in Utah, Western North Carolina, and New York City leading to positive public health impacts.

There is not a financial impact as a result of the recommended action.

Approve recommendation.

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