



City of Pittsburgh

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Text File

Introduced: 10/18/2016

Bill No: 2016-0882, **Version:** 1

Committee: City Council

Status: Adopted

WHEREAS, heroin and other opioids have created the worst drug addiction epidemic in United States history; and,

WHEREAS, in 2014, over 47,000 Americans were killed by an overdose - more than were killed by guns, or died in traffic accidents; and,

WHEREAS, during this council meeting, more than five Americans will die of an overdose; and,

WHEREAS, a report issued by the Allegheny County Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD), titled, "Opiate-Related Overdose Deaths in Allegheny County: Risk and Opportunities for Intervention," reveals that 1355 residents of Allegheny County died of an opiate-related overdose between the years 2008-2014; and,

WHEREAS, the report reveals Allegheny County has some of the highest concentrations of death by overdose in the Commonwealth; and,

WHEREAS, the communities that suffered 13 or more overdose deaths during this time period include the City neighborhoods of Spring Hill-City View, Allentown, Beechview, and Carrick, and the municipalities of Mt. Oliver, Sharpsburg, and Penn Hills, with the highest number of overdose deaths occurring in the City neighborhoods of Allentown, Beechview, and Carrick; and,

WHEREAS, opioid-related crimes such as theft and child neglect tear apart the fabric of our communities, and they are on the rise, as an estimated 70-80% of Pennsylvania's criminal offenders have substance abuse problems; and,

WHEREAS, opioid abuse damages families, neighborhoods, and communities and more of our neighbors are victimized by these substances and those in their grasp every single day; and,

WHEREAS, the PA HOPE (Heroin, Opioid, Prevention, and Education) Caucus, co-chaired by local Democrats Senator Jay Costa, Jr. and Representative Ed Gainey, and Republicans Senator Gene Yaw and Representative Aaron Kaufer, is a bipartisan initiative with more than 80 members in the Pennsylvania state legislature, and has come together to develop legislation to combat the opioid crisis; and,

WHEREAS, the caucus has put forth a number of bills that focus on issues ranging from emergency detoxification to prevention education in public schools across the state; and,

WHEREAS, on September 28, 2016, Governor Tom Wolf addressed a Joint Session of the Legislature focused on battling the opioid epidemic, calling on the Commonwealth to strengthen Pennsylvania's prescription drug monitoring program, prepare doctors and physicians for prescribing opioids and pain management by improving medical school and continuing education curricula on opioids, place limits on opioid prescriptions in emergency rooms, and to consider several bills aimed at addressing other pieces of the opioid crisis; and,

WHEREAS, out of dozens of pieces of legislation, six bills have been chosen to pursue for final passage; and,

WHEREAS, these bills are:

HB 1698 - Representative Heffley which requires insurance plans to provide access to abuse-deterrent opioid drugs;

HB 1699 - Representatives Brown and Rosemary which prohibits ER from prescribing more than a 7 day supply of opioid, providing for exceptions;

HB 1805/SB 1202 - Representatives Masser and Yaw which makes licensing boards require 2 hours education in pain management and 2 hours in dispensing or prescribing practices, and 2 hours either/or for renewal of license, amended to require query to the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program every time;

HB 2335 - Representative Gainey which requires the Department of Health to provide a uniform voluntary nonopioid directive form whereby patients may refuse the prescribing of opioids;

SB 1212 - Representative Wozniak which requires schools to incorporate child opioid awareness education in grades 6-12 beginning in 2017-18;

SB 1367 - Representative Yaw which requires a written consent from parents/guardians to prescribe opioid to minors, limits prescription to 7 days, and provides for exceptions;

SB 1368 - Representative Killion which states that licensing boards shall require proof of completion of approved safe prescription education and must implement safe prescription of opioid curriculum;

WHEREAS, although not prioritized for final passage, the Council of the City of Pittsburgh strongly urges the state legislature to legislate standards for high quality drug and alcohol recovery homes (also known recovery residences, sober homes, three-quarter homes) which are currently not certified by the Department of Drugs and Alcohol. The prevalence of low quality recovery homes is a detriment to the healing process for addicts and communities. Two bills address the recovery homes issue, including HB 1884 - Representative Tina Davis and HB 2325 by Representative Aaron Kaufer; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Council of the City of Pittsburgh urges the Pennsylvania legislature to pass legislation reflective of best practice approaching to addressing the opioid epidemic, inclusive of high standards for recovery homes; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Council of the City of Pittsburgh commends the bipartisan approach of the Pennsylvania State Legislature and urges that this legislation passes as soon as possible so as not to lose one more Pennsylvanian to this crisis.