



# City of Pittsburgh

510 City-County Building  
414 Grant Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

## Text File

**Introduced:** 8/31/2020

**Bill No:** 2020-0668, **Version:** 1

**Committee:** City Council

**Status:** Adopted

**WHEREAS;** in 2019, The U.S. had 70,980 overdose deaths representing a more than 400% increase since 1999, and,

**WHEREAS;** in 2019, Allegheny County reported 570 overdose deaths representing a more than 400% increase since 1998, and,

**WHEREAS;** the roots of the moralization and stigmatization of individuals suffering from a substance use disorder in America can be traced to the Puritans, and,

**WHEREAS;** moralization is the process of converting a preference into a value which can contain both positive and negative valences, and,

**WHEREAS;** the moralization of substance use disorder in the United States has historically taken a negative valence and led to the stigmatization of persons who use drugs, especially if a recurrence of use occurs following a period of recovery, occurs in a person experiencing homelessness, a person with justice-involvement, and more, and,

**WHEREAS;** the now dominant approach to treating a person with substance use disorder is through a disease model which views addiction as a severe, chronic stage of substance-use disorder, in which there is a substantial loss of self-control, as indicated by compulsive drug taking despite the desire to stop taking the drug, and,

**WHEREAS;** substance use disorder as seen through the disease model understands that substance use is a chronic, recurring brain disease that is characterized by compulsive drug seeking and use, despite harmful consequences, and,

**WHEREAS;** stigmatization and moralization of persons who use drugs creates barriers to treatment, care, and harm reduction generally, and,

**WHEREAS;** our use of language is the fundamental way humans make sense of the world around them and understand the scope of potential action in the world, and,

**WHEREAS;** the use of positive, person-first language can reduce the stigma surrounding substance use and create a positive valence towards the moralization of individuals suffering from substance use disorder,

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED,** The Council of the City of Pittsburgh calls upon its representatives and citizens to take the person first pledge and commit to reducing the stigmatization of

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