

City of Philadelphia



Council of the City of Philadelphia
Office of the Chief Clerk
Room 402, City Hall
Philadelphia

(Resolution No. 150029)

RESOLUTION

Authorizing Council's Committee on Public Safety to hold public hearings examining the effectiveness of utilizing Narcan in response to drug overdoses and the feasibility of its use in the City of Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, Drug overdose is now the leading cause of injury death in the United States. Pennsylvania has the 14th highest drug overdose mortality rate in the nation; and

WHEREAS, In Pennsylvania, more than 12,000 people have died from accidental drug overdoses since 2001. More than 1,600 people died from drug overdoses in Pennsylvania in 2010 alone. Experts say the increase is due in large part to the abuse of legal painkillers called opioids, whose users switch to heroin when their prescriptions run out or become too expensive; and

WHEREAS, Rural overdose deaths increased from about one per 100,000 residents to 13 per 100,000, according to the report by the Center for Rural Pennsylvania. Urban fatalities rose from about three to 16 per 100,000 residents, the study found; and

WHEREAS, Naloxone, commonly referred to by the brand name Narcan, is a safe, effective medication that paramedics use when someone overdoses on opiates (Opiates include: heroin, morphine, methadone, OxyContin, Vicodan, Percoset, codeine, Fentanyl). The medication reverses the effects of heroin and opioids like oxycodone; and

WHEREAS, Administered as a nasal spray or injection, naloxone works by blocking receptors in the brain that opiates latch onto; and

WHEREAS, Fourteen states, Connecticut, New Mexico, New York, New Jersey, Washington, Illinois, Colorado, California, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Rhode Island, Delaware, Vermont and Florida, as well as the District of Columbia, have enacted Good Samaritan laws which provide limited Good Samaritan protection from arrest and prosecution for drug charges for people who call 911 in an overdose situation; and

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WHEREAS, Pennsylvania had permitted paramedics and doctors to use it, police were not able to legally administer the antidote; and

WHEREAS, A new Pennsylvania law allows police departments, law enforcement agencies and fire departments to obtain a supply of naloxone and authorizes police officers, law enforcement officers or firefighters, who have completed training, to administer naloxone to a person undergoing or believed to be undergoing an opioid-related drug overdose. The new law also allows physicians to prescribe naloxone to friends and relatives of addicts, who are often the first people to come into contact with someone suffering an overdose; and

WHEREAS, The law also exempts the following people from civil liability and criminal prosecution, if acting in good faith when the medication is administered: a first responder; a person who administers naloxone and a practitioner who prescribes naloxone; and

WHEREAS, Police in the Boston suburb of Quincy, Massachusetts, have carried the nasal spray since 2010 and said in July 2013 that they used naloxone 179 times, reversing 170 overdoses — a 95 percent success rate; and

WHEREAS, The City needs to invest in a proven way to save lives and equipped first responders with an effective way to battle against drug overdoses; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That the Committee on Public Safety is hereby authorized to hold public hearings regarding the feasibility of using naloxone by first responders in the City of Philadelphia as a way to battle against drug overdoses.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That in furtherance of such investigation, the Committee is hereby authorized to issue subpoenas as may be necessary or appropriate to compel the attendance of witnesses and the production of documents to the full extent authorized under Section 2-401 of the Philadelphia Home Rule Charter.

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CERTIFICATION: This is a true and correct copy of the original Resolution, Adopted by the Council of the City of Philadelphia on the twenty-second day of January, 2015.

Darrell L. Clarke
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Michael A. Decker
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmember O'Brien

Sponsored by: Councilmembers O'Brien, Goode, Bass, Greenlee, Tasco, Council President Clarke, Councilmembers Oh, Kenney, Johnson, Jones, Neilson, O'Neill, Squilla and Henon