



City of Philadelphia

City Council
Chief Clerk's Office
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Philadelphia, PA 19107

Legislation Text

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Authorizing the Committee on Public Health and Human Services to hold hearings to assess the City of Philadelphia's efforts, as coordinated by the Managing Director's office and our Human services departments, to prevent and treat abuse, addiction, and disease related to the use of opioids.

WHEREAS, In 2017, the City of Philadelphia estimated that 469,000 residents used a prescription opioid, 150,000 needed substance use disorder treatment, and 1,200 died from drug overdose, a substantial increase from the 907 reported deaths in 2016; and

WHEREAS, In Fiscal Year 2017, the City of Philadelphia appropriated \$2.631 billion to address neighbors' quality of life through the Community Based Health (CBH), the Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual Disability Services (DBHIDS), the Department of Human Services (DHS), the Department of Public Health (DPH), the Mayor's Office of Community Empowerment and Opportunity; and

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia needs adequate oversight for contracts and services provided through these appropriations; for example, CBH recently discontinued several contracts under the \$1.302 billion Health Choices Behavioral Health Fund due to medical fraud, yet CBH still lacks a public process for evaluating the quality of providers entrusted with the care of hundreds of thousands of patients; and

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia needs to join Governor Wolf in his declaration "Opioid Crisis" and declare our own "local" public health crisis by creating a comprehensive reform plan that examines our current systems, funding, and barriers to services for people in need of services; and

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia and the Department of Public Health needs to articulate a comprehensive strategy for public safety, drug treatment, and homelessness in Kensington, the epicenter of illegal drug trafficking, where massive open-air markets trap residents in their homes, and where proven harm reduction organizations, such as the Kensington Counts Coalition and Prevention Point Philadelphia, need resources to provide comprehensive medical care, meals, legal and housing support, overdose reversal training, and syringe exchanges; and

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia has struggled to balance outreach, services, and the need to meet those suffering from addiction where they are with the need to address the trauma inflicted in children and families who daily confront encampments in the public right of way where drug use, prostitution, and a lack of sanitation create a community health crisis; and decisions about strategies cannot be imposed from the top but must provide a respectful community engagement discussion; and

WHEREAS, The City Controller, Rebecca Rhynhart, in addition to performing annual audits of every City department, will be using performance audits to look more closely at specific departments and has prioritized the Community Behavioral Health "CBH" as we continue to analyze and ensure fiscal responsibility with our spending and budgeting, especially surrounding programs related to treating abuse, addiction, and disease related to the use of opioids; and

WHEREAS, City Council will work closely with our City Controller and her department to inform the process, through a robust public hearing and discussion and have her provide full hearings on her findings; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That the Committee on Public Health and Human Services will review contracts and services provided by CBH, DBHIDS, DHS, DPH, and CEO, to ensure Philadelphia develops a community driven public strategy that helps combats the opioid crisis through quality prevention and treatment services and insures public safety and the protection of the quality of life for residents and neighborhoods impacted.