City Council
Chief Clerk's Office
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Philadelphia, PA 19107

Legislation Text

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Authorizing the Committee on Health and Human Services to hold hearings on the proliferation of unlicensed and unregulated recovery homes in the City of Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, A report from the Philadelphia Department of Health found that there were 1,217 unintentional drug overdose deaths in 2017, a 34 percent increase from 2016; and

WHEREAS, More than 15 million people struggle with alcohol abuse in the United States, while less than eight percent of those receive treatment; and

WHEREAS, Those who are recovering from drug and/or alcohol addiction often require an array of supportive services to maximize their rehabilitation and create additional opportunities for wellness and recovery, including life skills, literacy/education, domestic violence counseling, job readiness, and housing; and

WHEREAS, For people who are newly sober, certified and regulated recovery housing can provide a structured drug-free environment and support for recovering substance abusers as they rebuild their lives and maintain sobriety after treatment or incarceration; and

WHEREAS, The Philadelphia Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual Disability Services' Office of Addiction Services (OAS) currently funds a recovery house system for persons enrolled in state-licensed outpatient substance abuse programs, which includes 21 recovery house sites operated by 13 organizations, providing a total of 288 beds across Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, Recovery and sober living housing has become a fast-growing and lucrative segment of the housing industry, fueling an increase in the number of unregulated recovery houses which exploit their residents for financial gain, operate in unsafe environments, and do little to help clients in early addiction recovery; and

WHEREAS, The Pennsylvania Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs is currently drafting standards for a voluntary certification process for recovery houses, which includes building standards, an ethics code, data collection, minimum policies and procedures for operating homes, and funding assistance; and

WHEREAS, It is estimated that over 100 recovery houses operate illegally throughout the City, running afoul of licensing and zoning regulations and often existing as illegal boarding houses, mostly in vulnerable communities; and

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia must ensure that recovery houses are operated in a safe and appropriate manner in order to warrant the best possible outcomes for individuals with substance abuse problems; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Hereby authorizes the Committee on Health and Human Services to hold hearings on the proliferation of unlicensed and unregulated recovery homes

in the City of Philadelphia.