

Legislation Text

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Authorizing the Committee on Public Health and Human Services to continue to hold hearings to assess the City of Philadelphia's efforts, as coordinated by the Managing Director's Office and human services departments, to prevent and treat abuse, addiction, and disease related to the use of opioids; and to assess the City's response to the 2020 Restorative Investment Plan for Kensington Residents.

WHEREAS, On January 25, 2018, City Councilmembers Maria D. Quiñones Sánchez, Mark Squilla, Cindy Bass, and Allan Domb introduced Resolution No. 180037, calling for public hearings to insist upon a community driven public strategy for prevention, treatment, public safety, homelessness and neighborhood quality of life; and to review contracts and services by the City's public health entities. During the previous year, an estimated 469,000 residents used a prescription opioid, 150,000 needed substance use disorder treatment, and 1,200 died from drug overdose. During the same period, the City expended more than \$2 billion through Community Based Health, the Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual Disability Services, the Department of Human Services, the Department of Public Health and the Office of Community Empowerment and Opportunity; and

WHEREAS, On March 12, 2018; April 4, 2018; November 26, 2018; and June 26, 2019; City Council hosted hearings across the Kensington community, the epicenter of illegal drug trafficking, where massive open-air markets trap residents in their homes; where proven harm reduction organizations need resources to provide comprehensive medical care, meals, legal and housing support, overdose reversal training, and syringe exchanges; where children and their families suffer trauma upon confronting drug use, prostitution, and a lack of sanitation in public right of ways; and where neighbors have pleaded for the City to develop a more comprehensive strategy for public safety, drug treatment, homelessness, and restorative investments in a neighborhood where families have endured years of trauma within an environmental, health, and safety crisis; and

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia must take drastic and immediate action to address neighbors' concerns. The 2020 Restorative Investment Plan for Kensington Residents includes: frequent trash-pickups, alleyway cleaning and lighting, the provision of cleaning supplies and trash receptacles similar to the Temple-area *PhilaCan* program; safe school corridors and youth programs that provide safe afterschool, summer, and employment environments; reclamation of vacant and blighted properties; nuisance enforcement by the Department of Licenses and Inspections; repairs and improvements to windows, gates, facades, and lighting; a dedicated police service area to address violence related to open-air drug trafficking; wrap-around treatment protocols, beyond Police Assisted Diversion, to support individuals who may endanger themselves and others in their public use of harmful substances; neighborhood access to preventative health care, immunizations, and trauma-informed counseling; a long-term homelessness strategy that provides long-term economic security for Kensington and Center City residents alike; affordable, accessible housing investments, including rental supports and home repairs for neighbors' economic security; and a specific plan to provide safe, healthy, and adequate services and resources during the COVID-19 crisis; and

WHEREAS, The Office of Homeless Services must specifically account for current investments in Kensington, by provider and service, and why the City has not meaningfully addressed concentrated homelessness populations in excess of 700 individuals here, in this neighborhood, compared to Center City, the Philadelphia International Airport, and other parts of the City of Philadelphia; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the City Council of Philadelphia's Committee on Public Health and Human Services is authorized to assess the City's efforts to prevent and treat abuse, addiction, and disease related to the use of opioids; to assess the City's response to the 2020 Restorative Investment Plan for Kensington Residents; and to further recommend immediate action for the health and safety of our community.