



City of Philadelphia

City Council
Chief Clerk's Office
402 City Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Legislation Text

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Authorizing The Special Committee on Kensington to convene and explore best practices in substance use disorder outreach and to investigate the effectiveness of current methods used by the City of Philadelphia and its partners.

WHEREAS, Kensington, a neighborhood in Philadelphia, has transformed into a hub for illicit drug activities; and

WHEREAS, According to the Philadelphia Department of Health's 2022 report, there were 1,413 unintentional drug-related deaths in the City, with the majority occurring in the Kensington area. Consequently, it is of utmost importance to locate and offer services to substance use disorder (SUD) individuals; and

WHEREAS, In light of the alarming rise in fentanyl and xylazine use, it is imperative to allocate resources and support outreach initiatives that can offer low-threshold care to individuals at risk; and

WHEREAS, The White House Office of National Drug Control Policy encourages state, county, and City health authorities to proactively seek out those believed to be consuming fentanyl adulterated with xylazine before their conditions worsen and become more difficult to address; and

WHEREAS, The implementation of evidence-based outreach practices, warm handoffs, wound care, a dedicated mobile team, using proper terms to reduce negative bias when discussing addiction, and medication-assisted treatment all through a central hub that connects SUD outreach teams will significantly enhance the coordination of efforts in covering the Kensington area; and

WHEREAS, A study by a team of University of Pennsylvania physicians along with the Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services has shown the use of warm handoffs results in better outcomes for SUD patients that are admitted to an emergency room transitioning to longer treatment facilities; and

WHEREAS, The need for a medication-assisted holding zone for SUD individuals is crucial in stabilizing a patient until they can be transported to a treatment bed to prevent further harm from withdrawal; and

WHEREAS, When talking to people with SUD, The National Institute of Drug Abuse recommends and encourages the use of non-stigmatizing language that reflects an accurate, science-based understating of SUD to encourage the acceptance of treatment; and

WHEREAS, According to data collated by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Pennsylvania has been ranked as one of top 10 states for substance use disorder and mental health treatment access and investments; and

WHEREAS, A recent Newsweek national survey of over 4,000 medical professionals in the addiction treatment industry, which ranked the top addiction treatment centers in the nation, seven facilities from Philadelphia were

identified further highlighting the City's recognition in SUD treatment and the need to expand successful outreach programs; and

WHEREAS, Community-based programs will play a crucial role as partners in these endeavors and they are at the forefront of engaging with individuals who are at risk of exposure to dangerous drugs like fentanyl laced with xylazine; and

WHEREAS, For fiscal year 2023, the Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbilities Services, Office of Homeless Services, and the Department of Public Health had a combined budget of an estimated \$2.6 billion and The Special Committee on Kensington is requesting how much was invested in SUD outreach and the impact of such investment; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That The Special Committee on Kensington is authorized to convene to explore best practices in substance use outreach and to investigate the effectiveness of current methods used by the City of Philadelphia and its partners.