



# City of Chicago



R2017-733

Office of the City Clerk

## Document Tracking Sheet

**Meeting Date:** 9/6/2017

**Sponsor(s):** Burke (14)  
Scott, Jr. (24)

**Type:** Resolution

**Title:** Declaration of opioid crisis as public health emergency and call for coordinated response by federal, state and local agencies and law enforcement communities to increase access to substance abuse prevention and treatment programs

**Committee(s) Assignment:** Committee on Finance

## RESOLUTION

**WHEREAS**, the City of Chicago is a home rule unit of government pursuant to the 1970 Illinois Constitution, Article VII, Section 6(a); and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to its home rule power, the City of Chicago may exercise any power and perform any function relating to its government and affairs including promoting the quality of life and the welfare of its citizens; and

**WHEREAS**, drug addiction is a widespread and growing problem, with an estimated 2.6 million opioid addicts in the United States; and

**WHEREAS**, since 1999, the number of both opioid prescriptions and prescription opioid overdoses have quadrupled in the United States; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2016, 1.4 million privately insured patients were diagnosed with opioid dependency, compared to only 241,000 such patients in 2012; and

**WHEREAS**, with approximately 142 Americans dying every day as a result of opioids, the nation is enduring a death toll equal to the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks every three weeks; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2015, there were more than 33,000 opioid-related deaths across the United States; and

**WHEREAS**, deaths linked to Fentanyl, a powerful new opioid that is forty times more potent than heroin, tripled to more than 9,000 between 2013 and 2015 in the United States; and

**WHEREAS**, federal officials estimate that opioid abuse drains nearly \$80 billion annually from the American economy as a result of expenses tied to health care, criminal justice, and lost productivity; and

**WHEREAS**, public health experts project that opioids could kill roughly 250 Americans a day, or more than 650,000 Americans total, over the next decade as the crisis of addiction and overdose accelerates; and

**WHEREAS**, if public health experts' projections are correct, opioids could kill nearly as many Americans in a decade as HIV/AIDS has killed since the early 1980s; and

**WHEREAS**, on July 31, 2017, the Trump Administration's Commission on Combating Drug Addiction and the Opioid Crisis released its interim report urging the President to declare the opioid crisis a national emergency in order to make the epidemic a top priority and allow the administration to take bold steps toward combating drug abuse; and

**WHEREAS**, on August 10, 2017, President Donald Trump announced that he will officially declare the opioid crisis a national emergency, stating that the Administration will spend “a lot of time, a lot of effort and a lot of money on the opioid crisis;” and

**WHEREAS**, by issuing a public health emergency declaration, the federal government can expedite access to resources and different tools in response to the opioid crisis through the Stafford Act or the Public Health Service Act; and

**WHEREAS**, the Stafford Act would enable access to federal disaster relief funds and coordination with state agencies to scale up law enforcement and addiction treatment in response to the crisis; and

**WHEREAS**, through the Public Health Service Act, the Administration would also be able to mobilize and deploy medical staff in underserved areas, bolster staffing or train providers for medication-assisted treatment, or waive state licensing requirements for doctors which would allow addiction specialists to go into areas that currently do not have enough access to such care; and

**WHEREAS**, a declaration through either law could also allow Section 1135 waivers for Medicaid, which would permit the U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary to bypass regulatory hurdles which fail to reimburse services from inpatient facilities that treat “mental diseases,” including addiction, with more than 16 beds; and

**WHEREAS**, since 2014, six states including Alaska, Arizona, Florida, Maryland, Massachusetts and Virginia have successfully declared the opioid crisis a public health emergency in order to take a more purposeful aim at the battles they are waging on a local level; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2014, Massachusetts became the first state to declare the opioid crisis a public health emergency and has since seen a 24% decrease in the number of people being prescribed opioids; and

**WHEREAS**, after declaring the opioid crisis a public health emergency in June, 2017, Arizona officials were allowed to access a public health emergency fund and have since trained more than 1,000 law enforcement officers on how to administer naloxone; and

**WHEREAS**, by declaring the opioid crisis a public health emergency, states can implement more stringent guidelines for prescribing opioids, receive waivers to allow Medicaid to fund residential drug treatment and expand access to care, and increase the availability of naloxone to the public; and

**WHEREAS**, in addition, a state of emergency declaration would allow officials to access public health emergency funds for additional resources which could be used to train law enforcement officers how to administer naloxone, improve tracking and data gathering, and provide prevention, treatment and recovery support services; and

**WHEREAS**, at the very least, the immediate impact of such a declaration is that it would be used as a communication tool to give families notice of how severe of a threat the opioid crisis has become; and

**WHEREAS**, according to the Centers for Disease Control, Illinois had the third fastest-rising death rate from synthetic opioids in the United States, rising 120% from 2014 to 2015; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2016, there were 1,826 opioid-related deaths in Illinois which is over 80% of the total 2,278 overdose deaths; and

**WHEREAS**, of the 1,826 opioid-related deaths in Illinois in 2016, Fentanyl was responsible for nearly half of those deaths; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2016, there were 1,091 opioid-related deaths in Cook County compared to 649 deaths in 2015; and

**WHEREAS**, of the 1,091 opioid-related deaths in Cook County in 2016, Fentanyl was responsible for 562 of those deaths; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2016, the Chicago-Cook County Task Force on Heroin issued a final report recommending reform in education, treatment, data, law enforcement and overdose reversal, as to which the City expanded naloxone deployment to the entire Chicago Fire Department fleet; and

**WHEREAS**, the State of Illinois, the City of Chicago, and the County of Cook have yet to declare the opioid crisis a public health emergency and bring the epidemic to the forefront of public discussion; and

**WHEREAS**, by addressing the opioid crisis as a public health emergency, it would provide the State of Illinois and the City of Chicago an opportunity to act in a collaborative effort in bringing the crisis to the forefront of public discussion, prevent new cases of substance abuse disorders, and leverage emergency resources toward an epidemic that needs immediate action; now, therefore

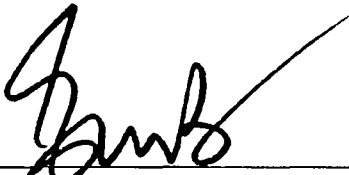
**BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHICAGO:** that the City Council of the City of Chicago does hereby urge President Donald Trump to officially declare the opioid crisis a national public health emergency and request that the Administration implement a coordinated response in order to protect American families from the perils of this deadly epidemic that continues to plague our nation; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the City Council of the City of Chicago does hereby urge Governor Bruce Rauner to officially declare the opioid crisis a state public health emergency and to take immediate action to implement a coordinated response with local agencies and law enforcement communities to combat the opioid crisis and increase residents' access to substance abuse prevention and treatment programs, as well as to ensure increased access to naloxone; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the City Council does hereby urge Mayor Rahm Emanuel to officially declare the opioid crisis a citywide public health emergency and to expand the deployment of naloxone to all first responders, including the Chicago Police Department and the Chicago Fire Department, in order to combat of the threat of the opioid crisis in our communities; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we, the Mayor and members of the City Council of the City of Chicago do hereby request Superintendent Eddie Johnson of the Chicago Police Department, Commissioner Jose Santiago of the Chicago Fire Department, and Commissioner Julie Morita of the Department of Public Health to appear before a Joint Committee on Finance and Public Safety to testify at a hearing regarding the City's current efforts toward combating the opioid crisis and the significance of increasing investment and expanding naloxone deployment to all first responders in response to the national epidemic; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that a suitable copy of this resolution be presented to President Donald Trump and Illinois Governor Bruce Rauner.



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Edward M. Burke  
Alderman, 14<sup>th</sup> Ward

