



Office of the City Clerk

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Legislation Text

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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 11th 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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