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Legislation Text

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OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

CITY OF CHICAGO

RAHM EMANUEL
MAYOR

October 14, 2015

TO THE HONORABLE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF
CHICAGO

Ladies and Gentlemen:

At the request of the Commissioner of Public Health, I transmit herewith, together with Alderman Burke, a resolution regarding a recent FDA decision approving pediatric opioid use.

Your favorable consideration of this resolution will be appreciated.

Mayor

Very truly yours,

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RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, in August 2015, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved the use of OxyContin, a dangerous prescription opioid, for pediatric patients ages 11 to 16; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and the Members of the City Council of the City of Chicago are committed to protecting the health and safety of Chicago's 2.7 million residents, especially children; and

WHEREAS, the United States is facing a growing epidemic of painkiller abuse and overdose deaths; and

WHEREAS, between 1999 and 2013, deaths from prescription opioid overdoses have quadrupled in this country; and

WHEREAS, a growing body of evidence shows that when addicted patients can no longer access prescription opioids, they often turn to heroin; and

WHEREAS, between 2009 and 2011, Chicago saw a 25% increase in the number of opioid-related emergency room visits; and

WHEREAS, the Chicago Fire Department transports up to 15 overdose victims to the emergency room every day, and in the first two days of October 2015, more than 70 Chicago residents overdosed on a batch of heroin that was likely laced with fentanyl; and

WHEREAS, OxyContin, if prescribed or used inappropriately, can lead to addiction, heroin use and overdose, and any consideration of expanding OxyContin's use to youth must factor in this reality; and

WHEREAS, providers who are inexperienced with this medication may see the FDA's action on OxyContin as a general approval to prescribe in situations where it is inappropriate, such as for short-term pain, or pain of mild or moderate intensity, leading to more addiction among youth; and

WHEREAS, the FDA's decision was based in large part on studies performed by the drug's manufacturer, Purdue Pharma-a company with a track record of misrepresentation, such as when it pled guilty in 2007 and agreed to pay some \$600 million in fines for misleading regulators, providers and patients about OxyContin's risk; and

WHEREAS, in 2014, the City of Chicago sued Purdue Pharma, among other companies, for misrepresenting the benefits and risks of opioids; now, therefore;

BE IT RESOLVED, that we, the Mayor and Members of the City Council of the City of Chicago, do hereby urge the FDA to reverse its approval of OxyContin use for children between 11 and 16 years of age; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the FDA establish an independent advisory committee that reviews the evidence regarding the safety and efficacy of OxyContin use in pediatric patients and accounts for the context of a nation facing increasing levels of addiction and death due to opioids; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this Resolution be provided to Senator Dick Durbin, Senator Mark Kirk, and the members of the Chicago delegation in the United States House of Representatives, as a sign of our concern regarding this important issue. .