



Photo by: Governor Tom Wolf, Flickr

Addressing the opioid crisis

This budget proposes funding to address one of the most pressing public health crises this city has faced — the scourge of opioids. Like many other cities, over the last two years we've seen this epidemic worsen. There were about 1,200 overdose deaths in Philadelphia last year — the highest death toll of any major city in the nation. That is why the City filed suit against the manufacturers of opioids. It is our hope that one day these firms will be forced to compensate the City for the costs that their unscrupulous marketing practices have created.

This epidemic is one of the most pressing public health crises our city has faced. Together, we will continue to work with residents to ease the quality of life issues that have arisen in neighborhoods close to the epicenter of the epidemic. We continue to implement our coordinated effort to address impacts to the West Kensington & Fairhill neighborhoods.

What the Mayor's FY19 Budget Supports

Treating addiction as a disease: The budget includes \$225,000 for a team of physicians to coach and provide consultation to physicians and other medical professionals to offer Medication-Assisted Treatment.

Improving emergency response: Increased investments support creating a medic unit that pairs emergency medical workers with outreach workers.

Providing direct access to treatment: The plan will allow agencies to continue developing "warm hand-offs" with health care organizations to more quickly connect recently overdosed people to treatment.

Preventing overdose deaths: Funding will support increased distribution of the overdose antidote, naloxone, to first responders and community members.

Investing in shelter for homeless: The budget includes \$1M in annual funds to support the "Hub of Hope" in Center City, which provides daytime respite and needed services to individuals on the street.

Focusing efforts for addiction-related homelessness: The plan will provide "low-barrier" housing options that do not require sobriety, including respite housing for individuals to "come inside" for daytime engagement and overnight resources similar to shelter services and "Housing First" apartments with wrap-around treatment and case management services.

Providing treatment versus jail: The budget invests \$750,000 in Police Assisted Diversion, which provides those with minor drug offenses the opportunity to find help rather than being arrested.

Addressing neighborhood impact: The Managing Director's Office will also focus on addressing the negative impact caused by the epidemic in affected neighborhoods — specifically, neighborhood safety and cleanliness — by improving needle clean-up and block-by-block safe streets organizing.