

CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
Board of Health

Resolution in Support of Operation of Overdose Prevention Facilities in Philadelphia

Approved July 9, 2019

WHEREAS, Philadelphia is in the midst of an unprecedented drug overdose epidemic driven by opioids: more than 1,200 Philadelphians died from drug overdose in 2017, which is approximately double the number of Philadelphians who died from drug overdose in 2014;

WHEREAS, the Mayor of the City of Philadelphia, the Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and the President of the United States of America have each declared the ongoing opioid epidemic either a disaster or an emergency pursuant to executive authority;

WHEREAS, the Philadelphia Department of Public Health has observed an alarming increase in the incidence of new HIV and Hepatitis C infections, likely caused by the opioid epidemic;

WHEREAS, the Mayor of Philadelphia has convened a task force that has developed a comprehensive strategy to address the opioid epidemic, which includes a recommendation to explore the operation of overdose prevention facilities;

WHEREAS, the American Medical Association voted in June 2017 to support, based on an evaluation of scientific evidence, the establishment of overdose prevention facilities where people who use intravenous drugs may inject self-provided drugs under medical supervision;

WHEREAS, relevant evidence shows that overdose prevention facilities:

- reduce overdose deaths,
- increase the number of people who initiate treatment for substance use disorders,
- reduce transmission of infectious diseases, including HIV and Hepatitis C,
- do not increase drug trafficking,
- do not increase crime,
- reduce public injection of drugs, and
- reduce litter, including hazardous discarded syringes; and

WHEREAS, overdose prevention facilities represent a broadly beneficial, evidence-based opportunity to meet people suffering from addiction where that addiction allows, by encouraging and facilitating treatment while providing harm reduction services;

NOW, THEREFORE, the Board of Health hereby supports the establishment and operation of overdose prevention facilities where people who use intravenous drugs may inject self-provided drugs under medical supervision in the City of Philadelphia.