

**EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 1-25**

**IMPLEMENTATION OF A PILOT  
WELLNESS COURT PROGRAM IN KENSINGTON**

**WHEREAS**, in connection with the declaration of a public safety emergency in Executive Order 1-24 (January 2, 2024), the Police Commissioner was required, in consultation with the Managing Director and Chief Public Safety Director, to develop a public safety plan to:

- i. Reduce the elevated levels of violent crimes, particularly gun crimes,
- ii. Combat the elevated levels of crimes against property and quality of life offenses, and
- iii. Develop a strategy to permanently shut down all open-air drug markets, including the open-air drug markets in the Kensington neighborhood of Philadelphia; and

**WHEREAS**, the illegal drug trade in Kensington has created a humanitarian crisis and is directly driving the elevated levels of violent crime, property crimes, and quality of life offenses in that neighborhood; and

**WHEREAS**, the Police Commissioner has developed a multi-phased initiative, known as the Kensington Community Revival, Phase Two of which involves heavy police presence and will include arrests for a variety of drug and drug-related offenses that drive violence and degrade quality of life; and

**WHEREAS**, the City recognizes that an increase in criminal law enforcement activities calls for additional opportunities for diversion, particularly for people struggling with substance use disorder. Those diversion opportunities should reduce participants' involvement in the criminal justice system and provide meaningful access to long-term care, treatment, and housing; and

**WHEREAS**, the current opportunities for diversion of people with low-level drug offenses do not include a fast-track, community-based, judicially supervised option; and

**WHEREAS**, a Wellness Court model can, for the first time in Philadelphia's history, provide people arrested for crimes associated with public drug use same-day physical and behavioral health assessments, basic medical care and withdrawal management, and opportunities to participate in judicially-approved diversion programs and enter into drug treatment; and

**WHEREAS**, by balancing increased criminal law enforcement with enhanced diversion opportunities, the City intends to address all aspects of the humanitarian crisis in Kensington, from the dire needs of unhoused users of controlled substances to the ongoing plight of residents and business owners; and

**WHEREAS**, the First Judicial District of Pennsylvania is prepared to pilot a Wellness Court in the Kensington neighborhood of the City; and

**WHEREAS**, the goals of a Wellness Court, including same-day diversion and limited exposure to the justice system, necessitate a limited exception to Executive Order No. 8-16;

**NOW THEREFORE**, I, CHERELLE L. PARKER, by the power vested in me as the Mayor of the City of Philadelphia, do hereby order as follows:

**SECTION 1. Establishment of a Wellness Court.**

The Office of Public Safety, in coordination with the Police Department, the Managing Director's Office, the Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual Disability Services, and any other necessary City agencies, shall collaborate with the First Judicial District of Pennsylvania and any other necessary non-City entities to plan and implement a Wellness Court pilot. The pilot should allow a person who has been arrested the opportunity for same-day physical and behavioral health assessment, basic medical care and withdrawal management, diversion, and intake for treatment.

**SECTION 2. Limited Exception to Executive Order No. 8-16.**

A. On any day that a Wellness Court is in session, the requirements set forth in Executive Order 8-16 shall be partially suspended within the geographic area covered by the Police Department division where the court is located regarding the following summary level offenses under the Pennsylvania Crimes Code:

- i. Disorderly Conduct (18 Pa. C.S. § 5503);
- ii. Public Drunkenness and Similar Conduct (18 Pa. C.S. § 5505);
- iii. Obstructing Highways and other Public Passages (18 Pa. C.S. § 5507);
- iv. Criminal Trespass (18 Pa. C.S. § 3503).

B. Any person arrested consistent with Subsection A shall be transported promptly to a triage center for evaluation and possible diversion before being transported to the Wellness Court for the corresponding Police division, where a non-traffic summary citation will be filed pursuant to Pennsylvania Rule of Criminal Procedure 441.

**SECTION 3. Effective Date.**

This order shall take effect immediately.

1-8-25

Date



Cherelle L. Parker, Mayor