

RESOLUTION NO. 20180524-038

WHEREAS, the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan established a priority of creating a Healthy Austin Program that would increase healthy behaviors and improve coordination between the Austin Public Health Department, other departments within the City and counties, non-profit organizations, and the community; and

WHEREAS, City Council adopted a strategic direction setting a key outcome experienced by the Austin community of enjoying a sustainable environment and a healthy life, both physically and mentally; and

WHEREAS, the use of opioids, such as hydrocodone, oxycodone, fentanyl, carfentanyl, tramadol, methadone, and heroin can be fatal or cause severe side effects; and

WHEREAS, non-fatal opioid exposure may result in emergency calls to the Texas Poison Center Network, hospitalization, or treatment at area healthcare and treatment facilities; and

WHEREAS, mortality data from the National Center for Health Statistics at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicate that since 2006, Travis County has experienced at least 1,398 drug overdose deaths, including 590 from opioids; and

WHEREAS, Travis County has experienced an upward trend of drug overdose deaths, particularly those resulting from opioids; and

WHEREAS, similar data is unavailable for other counties containing City of Austin jurisdiction; and

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has documented a record-high year of deaths resulting from opioids in 2016 totaling more than 42,000 people nationally, which recent research indicates may undercount the severity of the impact of opioid addiction; and

WHEREAS, the growing recognition of an opioid epidemic has prompted civil litigation by communities nationwide against producers, distributors, and promoters of prescription pain killers for misleading the public regarding their addictive properties; and

WHEREAS, policy discussions are currently occurring at the local, state and federal level, and all 50 states have received crisis grants to address opioid abuse; and

WHEREAS, Austin Public Health has taken a strategic approach to addressing opioid abuse by analyzing outbreaks and collecting data, determining individuals at greatest risk, and using this information to recommend interventions and public education responses; and

WHEREAS, Austin Public Health and Downtown Austin Community Court have established contracts with local service providers, such as Austin Recovery, Integral Care, and A New Entry to provide substance abuse treatment to Austin residents; and

WHEREAS, numerous public entities and first responders, including Austin Travis County Integral Care, Central Health, Travis County Medical Examiner's Office, Austin Travis County Emergency Medical Services, Downtown Austin Community Court, and the Austin Police Department provide critical information or assistance to those who suffer from mental illness and substance abuse disorders; and

WHEREAS, community partners, such as the SIMS Foundation, have been providing treatment for substance abuse disorders using a community-based model of chronic disease management that is customized to Austin's music community; and

WHEREAS, according to the Austin Music Census, published in June 2015, 18% of all musicians receive health services through SIMS or the Health Alliance for Austin Musicians, while 17% of musicians have no health care coverage; and

WHEREAS, the number of Austin musicians and music industry professionals seeking treatment for opioids and other substance use through the

SIMS foundation doubled in 2017 from the previous year, and Austin has already suffered the tragic loss of three Austin musicians from accidental opioid overdose so far this year; and

WHEREAS, City Council Approved the Austin Music and Creative Ecosystem Omnibus Resolution (Resolution No. 20160303-019) on March 3, 2016, which culminated in a June 27, 2016 staff report detailing analyses and recommendations supported by multiple forms of input from various sources; and

WHEREAS, City staff's response to the Austin Music and Creative Ecosystem Omnibus Resolution identified priority recommendations, including developing partnerships between non-profit organizations and health services providers to address gaps in health care coverage for creatives and musicians; and

WHEREAS, on May 7, 2018, the City of Austin Music Commission passed Recommendation Number 20180507-005b, which requested the exploration of options to address opioid abuse, including pilot programs for innovative approaches, additional resources, and a focus on the music community as a part of a larger city-wide response to opioid abuse; and

WHEREAS, the City has previously intervened in response to the "K2" health crisis, and convened interdepartmental teams to address the serious consequences of the drug and its disproportionate impact on the homeless within the Austin community; and

WHEREAS, the University of Texas Dell Medical Center's UT Center for Health Communication recently began a project studying the Texas Prescription Monitoring Program in conjunction with the Texas Health and Human Services Commission's focus on the opioid epidemic; and

WHEREAS, previous studies indicate that it is possible to effectively reduce the impact of opioid addiction through various approaches, including improved syndromic and disease surveillance, community-based outreach and linguistically accessible public education, expanded access to medically assisted treatment, prescription drug take-back and disposal, use of fentanyl testing strips, and the increased availability and training on the use of naloxone; and

WHEREAS, the nationwide epidemic and growing abuse of prescription and illicit opioids in Austin constitutes an emerging public health and public safety situation; **NOW, THEREFORE**,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

City Council supports the City Manager in current efforts to address the escalating public health and public safety situation caused by opioid abuse, and encourages greater interdepartmental coordination and regional coordination with public safety, healthcare, and service providers to research national best practices, and promote community health and wellness. The City Council urges the City

Manager to take special consideration of any disproportionate impact upon the Austin music and creative community.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

City Council directs the City Manager to evaluate critical needs as early as possible and prepare any necessary funding requests during the Fiscal Year 2018-2019 budget adoption process. Staff recommendations should consider, without limitation:

- Increased epidemiological surveillance and monitoring;
- Public education and health promotion;
- Evidence-based prevention and harm reduction initiatives;
- Criminal justice diversion programs;
- Increased funding for a range of treatment and recovery options;
- Naloxone kits and first-response training; and
- Other best practices identified through interdepartmental and regional collaboration.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

City Council directs the City Manager to review new and upcoming opportunities for federal or state policy discussions, funding related to drug overdose and opioid abuse response, and consider amending the City's legislative agenda accordingly.

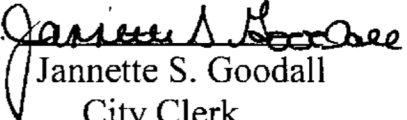
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

City Council directs the City Manager to review current litigation against the producers, distributors, and promoters of prescription opioids, and return to Council with a recommendation on the best options for the City to support the ongoing litigation, such as joining the lawsuit or filing an amicus brief.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

City Council directs the City Manager to report on the progress of these efforts and proposed trackable outcomes, and provide program or policy recommendations, by August 31, 2018.

ADOPTED: May 24, 2018

ATTEST: 
Jannette S. Goodall
City Clerk