

Offered by City Councilors Julia Mejia and Tania Fernandes Anderson, Arroyo, Bok, Breadon, Coletta, Flaherty, Lara, Louijeune, Murphy, Worrell and Flynn



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING TO CREATE MORE TRANSPARENCY INTO REPORTING AND ACCESSIBILITY INTO ADDRESSING THE DRUG OVERDOSE CRISES IN THE CITY OF BOSTON

- WHEREAS,** There has been an alarming recent uptick in deaths throughout the city of Boston due to drug overdoses; *and*
- WHEREAS,** In February of 2023, Boston Emergency Medical Services responded to a series of presumed opioid overdoses. Most of the individuals who were impacted believed that they were using cocaine; *and*
- WHEREAS,** The Massachusetts Department of Public Health identified that between 2010 to 2018 overdoses from stimulants like cocaine increasingly involved opioids. Toxicology screens from 2022 showed that fentanyl was present in 94% of opioid-related overdose deaths; *and*
- WHEREAS,** Xylazine, a non-opioid and long-acting veterinary tranquilizer, has been detected in an increasing number of street drugs, primarily in drugs sold as heroin or fentanyl. Xylazine can contribute to over sedation and increases the risk of overdosing, especially when combined with opioids; *and*
- WHEREAS,** Since initial reporting by the Massachusetts Drug Supply Data Stream in March 2021, xylazine continues to be detected in a substantial number of samples sold as fentanyl and heroin throughout Massachusetts. 29% of drug samples tested from Boston between November 2021 to November 2022 were found to contain xylazine; *and*
- WHEREAS,** Opioid overdoses are the leading cause of death for Americans aged 18 to 45. Fentanyl leads the charge, and, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, overdose rates are highest in urban Black communities; *and*
- WHEREAS,** It is the responsibility of the Boston City Council to ensure the City of Boston has a transparent reporting system in place to bring awareness to the current drug and overdosing crisis. Greater efforts must also be made to bring accessibility to resources to the residents so they know how to best respond in the moment of a

crisis, particularly in more vulnerable and susceptible communities; ***NOW
THEREFORE BE IT***

ORDERED: That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to address the drug overdose crises in the city of Boston. Representatives from the administration, including the Boston Public Health Commission, Boston Emergency Medical Services, Boston Police Department, Coordinated Response Team, and Access to Harm Reduction, Overdose Prevention and Education. Boston Healthcare for the Homeless, Grayken Center for Addiction Boston Medical Center, Bureau of Substance Addiction Services, Victory Programs, Eliot Community Human Services, Massachusetts General Hospital, and Police Assisted Addiction and Recovery Initiative, the Rize Foundation, as well as members of the public are also encouraged to testify.

Filed in Council: March 15, 2023