



# COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

## AGENDA ITEM

### BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

NORA VARGAS  
First District

JOEL ANDERSON  
Second District

TERRA LAWSON-REMER  
Third District

VACANT  
Fourth District

JIM DESMOND  
Fifth District

**DATE:** December 5, 2023

**DRAFT**

**XX**

**TO:** Board of Supervisors

### **SUBJECT**

**AUTHORIZATION TO ACCEPT FENTANYL OVERDOSE PREVENTION GRANT FUNDING AND WAIVE BOARD POLICY B-29 REQUIREMENT FOR FULL COST RECOVERY FOR GRANTS (DISTRICTS: ALL)**

### **OVERVIEW**

The opioid epidemic continues to affect communities nationwide, with illicit fentanyl driving a large proportion of the overdose deaths which also aligns with trends in San Diego County. In response to this crisis, the San Diego County Board of Supervisors (Board) approved several recent actions including, but not limited to:

- Adoption of the County of San Diego's (County) Comprehensive Harm Reduction Strategy (June 8, 2021 (4));
- Declaring Illicit Fentanyl a Public Health Crisis (June 28, 2022 (22));
- Enhancing Fentanyl Education and Strengthening Harm Reduction Efforts for Young People (October 11, 2022 (11));
- Adoption of the San Diego County Opioid Settlement Framework (October 25, 2022 (20)); and subsequent updated Opioid Settlement Framework (October 13, 2023 (13)).

In alignment with these actions, Health and Human Services Agency, Behavioral Health Services (BHS) remains committed to investing in programs and services to address the misuse of opioids, and related disorders, by pursuing new funding opportunities that support expanded access to prevention activities, engagement, and treatment.

On October 23, 2023, BHS submitted an application to the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) outlining a proposal to expand the County's prevention and harm reduction efforts through increased overdose, harm reduction and anti-stigma education and focused naloxone distribution efforts. On November **XX**, 2023, CDPH notified BHS of a conditional award in the amount of \$1,280,860.20 over a three-year grant period.

Today's action requests authorization to accept this three-year grant funding award for the period of March 1, 2024 through February 28, 2027. Additionally, today's action requests the Board to authorize the department to waive the Board Policy B-29 requirement for full cost recovery associated with the one-time grant funding. The public benefit of providing these services far

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outweighs the unrecoverable costs of approximately \$68,000 and maximizes grant funds used to implement the project.

This item supports the County's vision of a just, sustainable, and resilient future for all, specifically those communities and populations in San Diego County that have been historically left behind, as well as our ongoing commitment to the regional *Live Well San Diego* vision, by pursuing funding opportunities that support the expansion and enhancement of programs, outreach, and education for all impacted by the opioid crisis.

**RECOMMENDATION(S)**

**CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER**

1. Authorize the acceptance of \$1.28 million of grant funding and authorize the Agency Director, Health and Human Services Agency, or designee to execute all required documents, upon receipt, including any annual extensions, amendments, or revisions that do not materially impact or alter the services or funding level.
2. Waive Board policy B-29, Fees, Grants, Revenue Contracts – Department Responsibility for Cost Recovery, which requires full cost recovery for grants.

**EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT**

Efforts to reduce drug-related harm require interdisciplinary collaboration and evidence-based interventions across care levels. This grant opportunity complements San Diego County's existing multidisciplinary initiatives through the development of new strategies to enhance harm reduction, combat stigma, and improve outcomes for people who use drugs. Breaking down the systemic myths and misconceptions about harm reduction and substance use treatment is paramount to providing equitable services regardless of gender, race, age, sexual orientation, ethnicity, culture, spirituality, health, or socioeconomic status.

Activities include expanding overdose prevention, distributing naloxone and fentanyl test strips, and anti-stigma campaigns, focusing on priority populations: ages 18-45, Black/African American, American Indian/Alaska Native, Hispanic/Latino, justice-involved, homeless, and LGBTQ+. The proposed activities aim to increase access to overdose prevention tools, education, and to facilitate bi-directional referrals between service providers. Through the implementation of these concurrent efforts, opportunities to engage and support overdose risk among high priority populations will be provided, resulting in increased access to life-saving overdose prevention strategies and tools and harm reduction services.

**SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT**

Today's actions support the County of San Diego's (County) Sustainability Goal #4 to protect the health and well-being of everyone in the San Diego County region. The activities which will be funded through this grant will advance harm reduction and anti-stigma efforts to improve outcomes, eliminate health disparities, and support increased linkages to care for people who use drugs across the County. This item also supports Sustainability Goal #2 to provide just and equitable access to County services with investments focused on chronically underserved communities. As outlined in the Equity Impact Statement, grant activities will support service

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delivery to identified priority populations who disproportionately experience the harms of the opioid and fentanyl epidemic.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

TBD

**BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT**

N/A

**ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT**

On November 2, 2023, this item was presented to the Behavioral Health Advisory Board as informational.

**BACKGROUND**

The opioid epidemic continues to affect communities nationwide, with illicit fentanyl driving a large proportion of the overdose deaths which also aligns with trends in San Diego County. In response to this crisis, the San Diego County Board of Supervisors (Board) approved several recent actions including, but not limited to:

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In alignment with these actions, Health and Human Services Agency, Behavioral Health Services (BHS) remains committed to investing in programs and services to address the misuse of opioids, and related disorders, by pursuing new funding opportunities that support expanded access to prevention, engagement, and treatment.

In August 2023, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), Center for Healthy Communities, Substance and Addiction Prevention Branch’s Overdose Prevention Initiative released a Request for Applications (RFA) grant opportunity, entitled *Fentanyl Overdose Prevention Grant*, designed to encourage local health jurisdictions and community-based organizations to implement evidence-based and community-driven public health interventions for preventing overdose from fentanyl and other opioids.

On October 23, 2023, BHS submitted an application to CDPH outlining a proposal to:

- a) Provide harm reduction and overdose prevention education programs in schools through regionally focused overdose education and naloxone distribution programming to students, parents, guardians, educators, and school staff.
- b) Increase testing abilities for fentanyl through community fentanyl education, distribution of fentanyl test strips (FTS), training on how to use FTS to increase testing in the community and promotion of local drug checking services.

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- c) Expand and support overdose prevention including increasing naloxone access via regionally focused naloxone distribution and real-time overdose response outreach and distribution efforts.
- d) Reduce stigma through the development and implementation of anti-stigma activities that seek to support cross sector understanding and connectivity of harm reduction services and their value in supporting the well-being of people who use drugs (PWUD).

These proposed efforts are in alignment with the goals and objectives of the RFA and offer the opportunity for the County to continue to expand and enhance existing overdose prevention education and naloxone distribution efforts. On November XX, 2023 CDPH notified BHS of a conditional award in the amount of \$1,280,860.20 over a three-year grant period.

Today’s action requests authorization to accept this three-year grant funding award for the period of March 1, 2024, through February 28, 2027. Additionally, today’s action requests the Board to authorize the department to waive the Board Policy B-29 requirement for full cost recovery associated with the one-time grant funding. The public benefit of providing these services far outweighs the unrecoverable costs of approximately \$68,000 and maximizes grant funds used to implement the project.

**LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN**

Today’s proposed actions support the County of San Diego’s 2023-2028 Strategic Plan initiatives of Equity (Health) and Community (Quality of Life) as well as the *regional Live Well San Diego* vision by pursuing funding opportunities that support the expansion and enhancement of programs, outreach, and education for all impacted by the opioid crisis.

Respectfully submitted,

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HELEN N. ROBBINS-MEYER  
Interim Chief Administrative Officer

**ATTACHMENT(S)**

N/A