



**BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD (BHAB)
ACTION ITEM NOVEMBER 3, 2022**

UPDATE ON DECLARING ILLICIT FENTANYL A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS

Overdose deaths continue to rise, both nationally and locally, with illicit fentanyl contributing to a large proportion of these deaths. On June 28, 2022 (22), the San Diego County Board of Supervisors (Board) voted to declare illicit fentanyl a public health crisis and directed the Chief Administrative Officer to work with the County of San Diego (County) Health and Human Services Agency Director to:

- Develop recommendations and an implementation plan to address illicit fentanyl as a public health crisis and return to the Board of Supervisors within 180 days with an update.
- Explore and research funding to be used to support a comprehensive approach to fentanyl misuse prevention and harm reduction efforts, including local efforts to check the local drug supply for the presence of fentanyl and reduce its availability.

Today's update provides a report back on this direction with a request to implement a client-centered, data-driven, public health-oriented approach to service delivery and policy with recommendations adopted from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention Health Alert Network Advisory distributed on December 17, 2020, to address the increase in fatal overdoses driven by synthetic opioids. Today's update also includes a report back on October 11, 2022 (11) Board direction calling for additional harm reduction funding for naloxone distribution and training, as well as funding to support implementation of fentanyl awareness in schools.

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 the ongoing commitment to the regional *Live Well San Diego* vision of healthy, safe, and thriving communities. Additionally, all recommended actions in the implementation plan align with the County's Comprehensive Harm Reduction Strategy approved by the Board on June 8, 2021 (4) and include the application of evidenced-based approaches aimed at mitigating the risk of overdose and facilitating access to effective harm reduction interventions and treatment.

It is, THEREFORE, staff's recommendation that BHAB supports the approvals and authorizations needed to implement the above recommendation.