

RESOLUTION NO. 20170413-026

WHEREAS, K2, also known as Spice, is a readily available and inexpensive illegal drug that can cause dire side effects and death; and

WHEREAS, the Austin Police Department has focused on K2/Spice, including three K2 warrant round-ups and, in conjunction with the Downtown Area Command, has conducted operations at the Austin Resource Center for the Homeless using the HALO camera system to identify and arrest K2 dealers; and

WHEREAS, Austin Police Department Downtown Area Command is conducting daily directed patrols in affected areas to respond to health concerns of citizens and complaints, and overtime officers have been utilized to respond to the volume of calls; and

WHEREAS, Austin/Travis County EMS responds to mass casualty incidents propagated by the distribution and use of K2/Spice by instituting a “trigger” with the city’s First Watch application to alert the community of Public Safety Operations of acute upticks in K2 incidents and/or incidents involving multiple patients, and

WHEREAS, Austin Public Health has taken a strategic approach to address K2 outbreaks, by analyzing outbreaks and collecting data, determining individuals at greatest risk, and using this information to recommend intervention and public education responses; and

WHEREAS, Austin Travis County Integral Care provides critical assistance to those who suffer from mental illness and substance abuse disorders and together with the Homelessness Outreach Street Team, ATCIC is providing educational materials and guidance to those who are most vulnerable to K2; and

WHEREAS, those selling K2/Spice are intentionally targeting vulnerable

populations in our community, particularly those experiencing homelessness; and

WHEREAS, homelessness, poverty, drug addiction, and drug dependency have significant public health impact for members of the Austin community, and public safety challenges related to these issues cannot be addressed through enforcement alone and must include public health interventions, and

WHEREAS, policies related to harm reduction, clinical intervention and treatment, and permanent supportive housing have been shown to alleviate homelessness, poverty, drug addiction, and drug dependency, and these methods are a priority for the City in consideration of public safety and public health issues; and

WHEREAS, hundreds have been impacted locally, and deaths have been reported nationally due to K2/Spice use; and

WHEREAS, the distribution and use of K2/Spice in Austin constitutes an urgent public health and public safety situation;

NOW, THEREFORE,

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

The City Council supports the ongoing efforts directed by the City Manager to develop a public safety plan in response to the urgent public health and public safety situation caused by K2/Spice.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Council supports the City Manager's ongoing and urgent efforts to develop a public health education campaign regarding the dangers of ingesting K2/Spice and similar synthetic drugs.

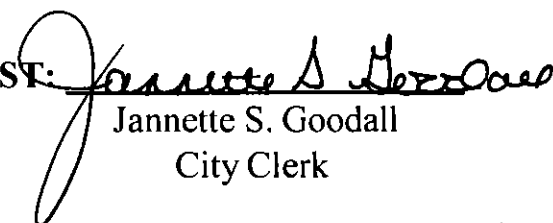
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Council asks the City Manager to identify the following and to provide this information to Council as soon as feasible:

- (1) Best practices from experts in relevant fields related to harm reduction and treatment for dependency and addiction to K2/Spice and other substances that impact the populations described herein; and
- (2) What additional resources may be necessary, public and/or private, to increase the effectiveness of public safety and public health agencies in responding to K2/Spice use.

ADOPTED: April 13, 2017

ATTEST:


Jannette S. Goodall
City Clerk