

26 **WHEREAS**, since 2019, the increase of counterfeit pills containing
27 Fentanyl seized by the DEA has increased by 430 percent; and

28 **WHEREAS**, in 2018, Texas paid \$20 billion for non-fatal overdose care in
29 emergency rooms and intensive care units; and

30 **WHEREAS**, previous studies indicate that it is possible to effectively
31 reduce the impact of opioid use disorder through various approaches, including
32 improved syndromic and disease surveillance, community-based outreach and
33 linguistically accessible public education, expanded access to medically assisted
34 treatment, prescription drug take-back and disposal, use of Fentanyl testing strips,
35 and the increased availability and training on the use of Naloxone; and

36 **WHEREAS**, harm reduction is a proactive and evidence-based approach to
37 reduce overdoses and overdose deaths, and the harms associated with drug use at
38 both the individual and community levels; and

39 **WHEREAS**, lack of access to safe stable housing for people experiencing
40 homelessness risks the health and safety of residents and makes it harder to access
41 life-saving services; and

42 **WHEREAS**, Naloxone, a medication that reverses the effects of a drug
43 overdose, is not widely accessible for use by community members and social
44 service agencies; and

45 **WHEREAS**, drug recovery programs often have long waitlists in our
46 community; and

47 **WHEREAS**, in 2018, City Council adopted Resolution No. 20180534-038
48 that recognized the growing opioid epidemic as an emerging public health and
49 safety crisis; and

50 **WHEREAS**, in 2018, the Community Health Paramedic Team within
51 Austin-Travis County Emergency Medical Services (ATCEMS), created an Opioid
52 Use Disorder Support program which responds directly to 911 calls for apparent
53 opioid overdoses, and/or follows up with overdose patients and their support
54 networks to offer support services and treatment; and

55 **WHEREAS**, the ATCEMS Community Health Paramedic (CHP) team
56 identified a gap in the availability of Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) for
57 patients with opioid use disorder (OUD); and

58 **WHEREAS**, patients often experienced a seven-to-ten day delay between
59 choosing to seek treatment and being able to begin treatment in a MAT program;
60 and

61 **WHEREAS**, with the delay, comes the guarantee of withdrawal symptoms,
62 which can be a deterrent for those trying to get help and an increased risk of
63 overdose and death; and

64 **WHEREAS**, in 2020, ATCEMS and the Office of the Chief Medical Officer
65 expanded the Opioid Emergency Response program to create a Buprenorphine
66 Bridge Program for short-term treatment that brings immediate relief to patients
67 who are seeking treatment for their OUD; and

68 **WHEREAS**, 92 percent of the patients treated through this program have
69 been successfully placed in treatment programs, and 86 percent were still active
70 and successful in their recovery seven days later; and

71 **WHEREAS**, in 2020, APD affirmed that it intends to utilize a portion of its
72 funding to supply Naloxone to all sworn officers and to provide training on its use
73 to treat opioid overdoses; and

74 **WHEREAS**, additionally, APD continues to work with other partners
75 including EMCOT, Austin Public Health, and the Office of Police Oversight
76 toward fulfilling the requirements of Resolution No. 20200611-096 which directs
77 the City Manager to include funding for the expansion of programs to reduce or
78 eliminate arrests for low-level, nonviolent offenses by substituting alternatives to
79 arrest and incarceration, including harm reduction strategies, when the underlying
80 issues can be better addressed with services and health care; and

81 **WHEREAS**, in 2021, City Council adopted Resolution No. 20210930-108
82 directing the City Manager to engage with Travis County on the creation of a joint
83 Austin/Travis County Public Health Commission and to return to Council with a
84 formal recommendation regarding implementation of the commission; and

85 **WHEREAS**, in 2021, City Council adopted Resolution No. 20211209-047
86 supporting the City's participation in both the Johnson & Johnson and Distributor
87 Settlements to allow the City to receive its allocation of settlement funds for use in
88 opioid mitigation measures and to participate in other opioid litigation settlements;
89 and

90 **WHEREAS**, the City is set to receive the first settlement payment
91 allocations next month totaling approximately \$1.5 million amongst four
92 settlements; and

93 **WHEREAS**, the settlement with Johnson and Johnson, Teva, and the
94 Distributors will have recurring payments over a nine, fifteen, and eighteen years
95 timespan, respectively; and

96 **WHEREAS**, Travis County declared the opioid epidemic a public health
97 crisis in May 2022 and passed a resolution to dedicate \$350,000 to initiate
98 overdose prevention measures; and

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

104 **WHEREAS**, City Council adopted a strategic direction setting a key
105 outcome experienced by the Austin community of enjoying a sustainable
106 environment and a healthy life, both physically and mentally; **NOW**,
107 **THEREFORE**,

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

109 City Council supports the City Manager in current efforts to address the
110 escalating public health crisis caused by drug overdoses and encourages greater
111 interdepartmental coordination and regional coordination with public safety,
112 healthcare, and service providers to equitably implement harm reduction strategies
113 and promote community health and wellness.

114 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

115 City Council declares a Public Health Crisis in Austin related to drug
116 overdoses.

117 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

118 The City Manager is directed to invest in harm reduction strategies utilizing
119 the Opioid settlement payments to address the overdose crisis, including the
120 following immediate harm reduction strategies:

- 121 • Ensure an adequate supply of Naloxone kits are available on all first
122 responder vehicles.

- 123 • Increased access to Naloxone and training through City channels other than
124 EMS or Austin Police Department, including but not limited to, Austin
125 Public Health, Austin Public Libraries, and Austin Parks and Recreation
126 Department.
- 127 • Increase access to Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT), Naloxone, and
128 support services and operations for community partners focused on harm
129 reduction strategies.
- 130 • Expansion of interlocal agreements, including, but not limited to, the
131 Sobering Center, Central Health, and Integral Care.
- 132 • Enhance previously established partnerships between ATCEMS CHP and
133 local resources, including Austin Public Health, Downtown Austin
134 Community Court, and others, to facilitate rapid assessment, screening and
135 referral to harm reduction services, medication-assisted therapy, and
136 behavioral health providers.

137 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

138 The City Manager shall provide a directive to the Public Health Commission
139 with the objective to develop a comprehensive local plan of action that develops
140 and prioritizes strategies related to prevention, treatment, and support services for
141 substance use disorders. The Public Health Commission should provide quarterly
142 reports to the Council's Public Health Committee and to the Travis County
143 Commissioners Court and include collaboration with harm reduction organizations
144 to identify strategies and action around the following topics:

- 145 • Increasing staff capacity at community and non-profit organizations, to
146 provide, but not limited to, street intervention counselors, mobile drug
147 treatment services, community health workers and peer support services.

- 148 • Identify and increase capacity for Housing First housing and harm reduction
149 strategies in housing.
- 150 • Creation of Criminal Justice Pre-arrest Diversion Programs that exist outside
151 of the criminal legal system that can address mental health and drug use
152 using a public health response.
- 153 • Assess mental and behavioral health access to treatment gaps.
- 154 • Assess state and federal grant opportunities for additional funding.
- 155 • Evaluate harm reduction strategies and research national best practices.

156 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

157 The City Manager is directed to create a data dashboard to provide
158 continuous sharing of relevant data with other City departments and community
159 partners and to improve data collection, integration, and dissemination of
160 information, and tracking inpatient and outpatient treatment availability to ensure
161 clients are linked to necessary services. This should incorporate system-wide
162 public health data, including, but not limited to, the database currently used to
163 track overdoses by Austin-Travis County EMS, Travis County Medical
164 Examiner's Office, hospital partners, APD, the Travis County Sheriff's Office and
165 other relevant software data and provide additional internal or contracted staffing
166 support to implement within one-year. Data metrics should include, but not limited
167 to, the following:

- 168 • behavioral health treatment rate for patients with a primary diagnosis of
169 opioid use disorder;
- 170 • doses of Naloxone distributed;
- 171 • doses of Naloxone administered by first responders;

- 172 • fatal overdoses; and
173 • nonfatal overdoses.

174 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

175 The City Manager is directed to create a public education campaign within
176 the next year to warn about the dangers of Fentanyl, mental health stigma, and
177 youth education, including:

- 178 • The development and implementation of a public awareness campaign
179 including educational materials that focus on the prevention of drug use,
180 risks of substance use, and community resources available in treatment,
181 recovery, harm reduction, and safe disposal of unused prescription drugs and
182 syringes.
- 183 • The development and implementation of an educational campaign for health
184 care providers about up-to-date and safe prescribing practices for the
185 treatment of pain and pain management and finding other non-opioid pain
186 management options.
- 187 • The development and implementation of an initiative to encourage
188 physicians to refer patients to MAT treatment when an opiate use disorder is
189 suspected or identified.
- 190 • Support expansion of street-level interventions, educational outreach, and
191 linking clients to the appropriate prevention, treatment, harm reduction, or
192 recovery programs.

193 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

194 The City Manager is directed to collaborate with the current monthly
195 workshops hosted by Travis County to provide input for the comprehensive local

196 plan of action and public education campaign. Additionally, the City Manager is
197 directed to host a town hall within the next six months to hear from people's lived
198 experiences and people most directly impacted by the overdose crisis.

199 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

200 The City Manager is directed to amend the City's Legislative Program for
201 the 88th Texas Legislative Session to support the legalization and access to
202 Fentanyl test strips, and expansion of Good Samaritan laws and be in opposition to
203 bills that increase arrest and severity of criminal punishment related to an
204 individual experiencing an overdose and impact the likelihood of bystanders
205 calling 911 related to overdoses.

206

207 **ADOPTED:** _____, 2022 **ATTEST:** _____

208

Myrna Rios
City Clerk

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