



CITY of NORTHAMPTON

Department of Health and Human Services

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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

City of Northampton Board of Health Resolution in Support of Overdose Prevention Practices

Whereas: The opioid overdose epidemic has greatly impacted Hampshire County for most of the last decade, and has been exacerbated by the infiltration of more potent opioids, such as Fentanyl, and continues to be intensified by other additives and sedatives, such as Xylazine. ¹

Whereas: The City of Northampton, as well as Hampshire County, have been accepting of Harm Reduction practices, evidenced by establishing a syringe service program back in 1995 — the first municipality to do so in Western Massachusetts, resulting in decreased disease transmission and deaths due to HIV/AIDS.

Whereas: Overdose Prevention Centers (OPCs), also known as Safe Consumption Sites, have been additional harm reduction tools used in over sixty cities, across eleven countries, and no person has died of a fatal opioid overdose at these sites over decades of operation. ²

Whereas: Research and evidence from these sites show a decrease in public drug use, a reduction in the demand on emergency medical systems and first response teams, and suggest such sites increase access and connection to treatment for substance use disorder. ²

Whereas: In the last five years of confirmed data, from 2018-2022, there have been 67 opioid-related overdose fatalities that occurred in the City of Northampton. ³

Whereas: Bills H.1918 and S.1242, *An Act Relative to Preventing Overdose Deaths and Increasing Access to Treatment*, have been reported favorably out of the Committee on Mental Health, Substance Use, and Recovery, and now referred to the Joint Committee on Health Care Financing.

Whereas: In being passed favorably, this legislation would set forth a “ten year pilot program establishing overdose prevention centers that utilize harm reduction tools, including clinical monitoring of the consumption of pre-obtained controlled substances in the presence of trained staff, for the purpose of reducing the risks of disease transmission and preventing overdose deaths”.

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the Board of Health of the City of Northampton:

¹ MA Dept. of Public Health, Bureau of Substance Addiction Services, *Clinical Advisory on Presence of Xylazine in the Massachusetts Drug Supply*

² NIDA. 2023, August 28. Overdose Prevention Centers. Retrieved from <https://nida.nih.gov/research-topics/overdose-prevention-centers>

³ MA Dept. of Public Health, Executive Office of Health and Human Services <https://www.mass.gov/lists/current-overdose-data>

- A. The Board members support harm reduction practices, which by extension include Overdose Prevention Centers, and are in favor of promoting evidence-informed practices in and around the City of Northampton and Hampshire County region.
- B. The Board recommends that the above legislation be passed without further delay.