

MOTION

9. Opioid Emergency Task Force

At the Regular Council meeting on November 13, 2018, Vancouver City Council referred the following Motion to the Standing Committee on Policy and Strategic Priorities meeting on November 14, 2018, to hear from speakers.

MOVED by Mayor Stewart
SECONDED by

WHEREAS

1. On April 14, 2016 a public health emergency was declared by the Provincial Health Officer of British Columbia due to the rise in overdose deaths due to fentanyl poisoning, with the BC Coroner's report confirming 995 people lost their lives in BC due to overdose that year. Between 2016 and 2017, over 80% of people dying in BC due to overdose were male and approximately 70% of people who passed away were using alone;
2. In 2017, Vancouver lost 366 residents to overdoses, equal to 1 death per day, and year-to-date data for 2018 indicates over 300 additional people have died in Vancouver, the ongoing 'epicentre' of Canada's opioid crisis. Indigenous residents have been typically overrepresented in the crisis, with Indigenous women especially impacted by high overdose rates;
3. The Urban Indigenous Opioid Task Force led by the Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Council provides a cultural response to the overdose crisis, including integrated treatment programs, 'Culture as Treatment' for substance use services, changes to drug policy, and a social determinants of health approach to addressing the crisis;
4. People with lived experience, who are actively using opioids obtained through the health system or other sources, have identified the need for health care interventions as well as initiatives targeting the social determinants of health to prevent death from overdose and to promote long-term healing, inclusion and well-being;
5. The Federal Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Mayors' Task Force on the Opioid Crisis has called for a pan-Canadian plan to scale up data and health responses to ensure timely access to addictions treatment and care; and
6. Mayor Kennedy Stewart intends to convene an Opioid Emergency Task Force to review the factors driving the current rates of opioid dependency, use of toxic street drugs, injury and death associated with opioid overdoses in Vancouver and to advise Council on short- and long-term interventions to mitigate the massive harm that this crisis is causing to our residents, families and communities.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council support the Mayor's appointment of an Opioid Emergency Task Force and direct City staff to provide administrative and technical support for the work of the Task Force.