

MOTION

The homelessness crisis in the City of Los Angeles continues to reach new heights and must be addressed with appropriate crisis level responses. In 2020 there was a steep increase in the number of individuals experiencing homelessness who died of an overdose. The needs of Angelenos experiencing homelessness are diverse and require a wide variety of solutions to create pathways to permanent housing and prevent their deaths. It is important that every person experiencing homelessness is able to access the type of services they need to stabilize and recognize their unique situation. In addition to immediate emergency services such as food assistance, access to hygiene centers and shelter, other services such as job-training and substance use disorder treatment are required in some circumstances to help homeless residents find housing and stay housed.

Through the first seven months of 2020, 926 homeless people died in L.A. County, an increase of 26% over the same period in 2019. This increase is not attributed to COVID-19. This increase in deaths in 2020 was driven by drug overdoses involving fentanyl, a report by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health concluded. Many of these individuals died alone on the street. This drastic increase in drug overdose deaths by unsheltered Angelenos highlights the need for more services to help people recover from addiction as well as housing options to enable the option to live in a sober environment.

Los Angeles has many sober living homes that provide 30 days of treatment, often billing health insurance providers thousands of dollars per month for their care. There are also some 30 day detox programs. However the city has very few beds or programs that are available for people who have completed treatment and wish to stay sober or want a sober housing environment direct from the streets. Housing that meets the needs of individuals who are trying to overcome a substance addiction is very difficult to find, and a lack of appropriate housing can encourage relapse.

The Homeless Housing Recovery Project (HHRP) serves individuals with substance use disorders and mental health needs. The program is a partnership between Tarzana Treatment Center and Providence Cedars-Sinai Tarzana Medical Center and Providence Holy Cross Medical Center that includes the deployment of Patient Navigators on site in the emergency rooms to enroll eligible participants who will continue to receive care after hospital discharge and in some cases temporary housing through a shared housing model.

In order to leverage private resources provided by Providence Cedar-Sinai, Council approved an allocation of \$450,000 from the General City Purposes, \$10M, Additional Homeless Service line item for temporary housing, housing navigators and ancillary services (20-0111-S1). Even with Council approval, it was difficult to execute a contract with Tarzana Treatment Center for this purpose because of the requirement that clients placed in the program's temporary housing also participate in substance use disorder programs.

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In addition to harm reduction models ensure that there are housing and shelter options with low or no barriers to entry, program such as substance use disorder programs that provide housing should be funded and allowable in order to provide options driven by the voice of lived experience. After engaging with people experiencing homelessness, such as individuals living in the Corbin Underpass who were part of a concerted rapid rehousing effort in October 2020, they have requested access to substance use treatment and housing that will support their recovery.

In order to ensure the stability of the HHRP, a continuous funding source must be identified along with a transparent discussion of past policy choices and potential adjustments that would allow more choices and support for people experiencing homelessness. Other shared housing models that support recovery from addiction should also be encouraged and funded to provide more and better opportunities for individuals with substance use disorder to secure housing.

I THEREFORE MOVE that Council instruct the City Administrative Officer, Chief Legislative Officer, Housing and Community Investment Department and request the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority to identify options for a reliable funding source for the Homeless Housing and Recovery Program and report back on policy changes, if any, that would be needed to be implement this.

I FURTHER MOVE that Council instruct CAO, CLA, HCID, and request LAHSA, in consultation with LA County Public Health and Housing for Health, to report back on models and policies that include housing AND options for housing that supports substance use recovery as well as housing retention policies, including feedback from people with lived experience.

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