

Communication from Public

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Comments for Public Posting: Homelessness & Poverty Committee February, 10, 2022 Agenda Item # 5 (21-1415) Addressing PEH Overdoses My name is David Bryant, and I am the Community Engagement Specialist at United Coalition East Prevention Project (UCEPP), a program of Social Model Recovery Systems. Since 1996, UCEPP has studied the link between environment and health in Skid Row and advocated alongside community members for equitable policies that support health and wellness. We support expanded access to naloxone at all City funded and operated sites that engage people experiencing homelessness (PEH) or locations where PEH frequent as a way to curb the current overdose crises. This has implications for the proposed public toilet program which we are advocating must be staffed and accessible 24 hrs here in Skid Row. Our two parks in Skid Row should also have accessible naloxone and operational hours should be expanded as PEH depend on the amenities the parks provide including toilets. These efforts to increase support for PEH must address the intersectionality of health risks for PEH and we have helped to coordinate multiple health and resources fairs simultaneously addressing overdoses, heart disease, and COVID-19. We conducted a Stress and Coping Survey in April of 2021 focused of PEH in Skid Row and Boyle Heights. The survey documented increased drug usage associated with pandemic and racial uprising related stress. It exposed extreme levels of poverty with 57% of individuals making \$5,000 or less annually. But it also identified coping strategies such as talking with friends and family, listening to music, excising, and speaking with health care providers. Many of theses activities occur at our local parks which the survey also identifies as crucial social support and access to toilets, water, and phone charging. In the prevention field we say the opposite of addiction is connection. Let's continue to support and expand existing amenities and increase leadership as well as employment opportunities for PEH.