

PUBLIC SAFETY

MOTION

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, the number of drug-involved overdose deaths has risen at an astonishing rate since 1999, from 16,849 a year to 106,699 per year. This increase is in large part to an even more drastic increase in deaths involving opioids, largely synthetic opioids. In 2021, there were 70,601 deaths involving synthetic opioids, comprising approximately 75 percent of overall drug-related overdose deaths.

This increase has been particularly acute in Los Angeles County, where, according to the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, deaths linked to illicit fentanyl - a synthetic opioid that is much more potent and dangerous than other opioids - increased 1,280% between 2016 and 2021, from 109 to 1,504 fatalities.

The addition of new substances to fentanyl including xylazine ("tranq") and isotonitazene ("ISO") have further compounded this public health crisis. Xylazine, in particular, does not respond to naloxone (NARCAN) and, in severe cases, can result in the need for amputation.

Often, our City personnel have been on the frontlines of this crisis with nearly 30 City departments anticipated to be trained on the use of NARCAN per recent City Council direction (CF 21-1415). However, as new synthetic drugs are confronted with greater frequency, both in the West Coast and nationwide, understanding the LAPD and LAFD's response procedures, and capacity to collaborate with local health authorities, will become critical in ensuring that the City can effectively respond to new, more lethal substances.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Council direct the Los Angeles Police Department and Los Angeles Fire Department to report on existing protocol for identifying and responding to new street drugs, including information sharing with other City departments and the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health.

I FURTHER MOVE that the City Council direct the Personnel Department to report on practices to ensure the safety of City personnel that may come into contact with new substances as they are identified.

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ORIGINAL

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