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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



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FOR INFORMATION CALL

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January 23, 2017

Ald. Michael J. Murphy  
(414) 286-3763

## **Common Council greenlights creation of Heroin, Opioid and Cocaine Task Force**

The Milwaukee Common Council on Wednesday voted unanimously to create a **City-County Heroin, Opioid and Cocaine Task Force** charged with studying the problems of drug abuse in Milwaukee County and presenting policy recommendations to address the issue, **Alderman Michael J. Murphy** said.

“Our analysis of the data shows that drug overdose deaths continue to climb in our community,” Alderman Murphy said. “While we have already developed a critical partnership to study this epidemic, the next step is to translate these data into action.

“That’s where the City-County Heroin, Opioid and Cocaine Task Force will come in, analyzing the problem with the help of stakeholders from throughout the community and producing policy recommendations to help reverse this startling, deadly trend.”

Alderman Murphy was the primary sponsor of the legislation creating the task force (attached), which will be composed of experts from the Common Council, Health Department, Police Department, Fire Department, Milwaukee County Circuit Court, Intergovernmental Relations, the County Executive’s office, healthcare or hospital systems, the Medical Society of Milwaukee County, medical professionals, community organizations and the general public.

The task force will build on the city’s partnership with the **Medical College of Wisconsin** and data analysis by Alderman Murphy’s office. An early examination of overdose figures had showed the county was on pace to endure a record number of heroin and opiate overdose deaths in the year 2016. Updated 2016 data are expected to be released as the task force is assembled in the weeks ahead.

“Drug abuse and addiction affect nearly every citizen in our community,” **Milwaukee County Executive Chris Abele** said. “Instead of stigmatizing these individuals and their families and addressing addiction solely through the criminal justice system, it is imperative that we tackle this public health crisis with supportive, evidence-based resources. The county looks forward to working with the city, the medical community, law enforcement, the courts, faith-based and community organizations, and partners at every level of government in taking a proactive approach to preventing and treating addiction.”

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Number  
161061  
Version  
SUBSTITUTE 2  
Reference

Sponsor  
ALD. MURPHY, BOHL, RAINEY

Title  
Substitute resolution relating to the creation of a City-County Heroin, Opioid, and Cocaine Task Force.

Analysis  
This resolution creates a City-County Heroin, Opioid, and Cocaine Task Force to study the problem of rising prevalence of opioid, heroin, and synthetic analog and cocaine (in both powder and crack form) misuse and addiction in Milwaukee and to make evidence-based recommendations to reduce fatal and nonfatal overdose within the community. The Task Force will be comprised of, but not limited to, members of the Common Council, Health Department, Police Department, Fire Department, Milwaukee County Circuit Court, Intergovernmental Relations, designees appointed by the County Executive, healthcare or hospital systems, Medical Society of Milwaukee County, medical professionals, community organizations, and the public. All City departments are directed to cooperate with and support the work of the Task Force. The Task Force shall be in existence for a minimum of six months from the effective date of the resolution, at which time strategies and outcomes will be fully evaluated by the Common Council and Mayor prior to renewing the Task Force charter.

Body  
Whereas, The misuse of opioids, heroin, and related synthetic analogs and cocaine (in both powder and crack form) has resulted in a significant and unmitigated risk to the public health and safety of the community; and

Whereas, Americans comprise 4.6% of the world's population yet consume 80% of the global prescription opioids, as well as two-thirds of the world's illegal drugs; and

Whereas, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has characterized prescription opioid use as a public health epidemic in the United States; and

Whereas, People who misuse prescription opioids may progress to use of heroin and other types of synthetic analogs; and

Whereas, "Opioid use disorder" is now recognized as a clinically valid chronic disease diagnosis requiring medical and behavioral therapy; and

Whereas, Opioid, heroin, and synthetic analog and cocaine (in both powder and crack form) use, addiction, and overdose are problems that affect an increasingly wide demographic of residents of the City of Milwaukee and Milwaukee County, including pregnant women and newborns; and

Whereas, According to the Milwaukee County Medical Examiner's Office, heroin-related overdose deaths in Milwaukee County comprised 90 percent of the 251 drug overdose deaths in 2015; and

Whereas, The U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) has announced that Milwaukee will be the second of four cities in the Midwest to take part in a pilot comprehensive diversion control law enforcement and prevention "360 Degree Strategy" to help cities dealing with the opioid misuse and heroin epidemic linked to violent crime; and

Whereas, The City of Milwaukee recognizes a need for taking a proactive and prevention-oriented approach to the assurance of public health and safety of the community; and

Whereas, Many residents of the City and County who misuse or suffer from addiction to opioids, heroin, and synthetic derivatives and cocaine (in both powder and crack form) are stigmatized from seeking treatment from medical providers; and

Whereas, A City-County Heroin, Opioid, and Cocaine Task Force, if created, could develop and recommend meaningful evidence-based solutions to the growing problem of heroin, opioid, and cocaine misuse, addiction, and overdose; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, By the Common Council of the City of Milwaukee, that a City-County Heroin, Opioid, and Cocaine Task Force is created and shall consist of:

1. Two Common Council members appointed by the Common Council  
President.
2. The Commissioner of Health or the Commissioner's designee.
3. The Milwaukee County District Attorney or the District Attorney's designee.
4. One representative selected by the Milwaukee County Intergovernmental  
Cooperation Council.
5. One representative of the community appointed by the Mayor.
6. One representative of the medical profession appointed by the Mayor.
7. Four members to be appointed by the County Executive.

; and, be it

Further Resolved, That the City-County Heroin, Opioid, and Cocaine Task Force is charged with investigating and making recommendations regarding ways to ensure long-term health and safety of City and County residents by reducing fatal and nonfatal overdose from misuse of opioids, heroin, and synthetic analogs and cocaine (in both powder and crack form) through data-driven public health prevention approaches; and, be it

Further Resolved, That the members of the City-County Heroin, Opioid, and Cocaine Task Force shall appoint the Chair; and, be it

Further Resolved, That the City-County Heroin, Opioid, and Cocaine Task Force staff is to be provided by the Office of the City Clerk; and, be it

Further Resolved, That all City departments are directed to support and cooperate with the work of the City-County Heroin, Opioid, and Cocaine Task Force; and, be it

Further Resolved, That the findings and recommendations of the City-County Heroin, Opioid, and Cocaine Task Force shall address current challenges to public health and safety by those affected by heroin, opioid, and cocaine use; and, be it

Further Resolved, That the City-County Heroin, Opioid, and Cocaine Task Force shall consider best practices from other communities as well as evidence-based scientific research when crafting its recommendations; and, be it

Further Resolved, That the City-County Heroin, Opioid, and Cocaine Task Force shall provide quarterly reports to the Common Council and report its final findings and recommendations to the Common Council no later than seven months from the effective date of this resolution; and, be it

Further Resolved, That the final findings and recommendations will be fully evaluated by the Common Council and Mayor prior to renewing the Task Force charter.  
Requestor

Drafter  
LRB167089-2  
Tea Norfolk  
1/18/2017