

SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA



ITEM: 3.79  
(ID # 15654)

MEETING DATE:

Tuesday, June 29, 2021

**FROM:** SUPERVISOR KAREN SPIEGEL AND Supervisor 3rd District Supervisor Chuck Washington:

**SUBJECT:** SUPERVISOR KAREN SPIEGEL AND SUPERVISOR CHUCK WASHINGTON: Resolution Declaring the Riverside County Fentanyl Awareness Campaign and Establishing a Countywide Multi-Disciplinary Committee to Assess Appropriate Response to the Rapidly Increasing Instances of Fentanyl Involved Overdose and Death

**RECOMMENDED MOTION:** That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Approve Resolution 2021-147 Declaring the Riverside County Fentanyl Awareness Campaign.
2. Approve and Authorize the establishment of a multidisciplinary committee to be comprised of representatives from the following Riverside County Departments: Riverside University Health System (RUHS)-Behavioral Health, Department of Public Social Services (DPSS), Office of the District Attorney, Emergency Management Division, Executive Office, RUHS-Public Health, Probation, and Sheriff's Department.

**ACTION:** Policy

*Michelle DeArmond*  
Michelle DeArmond, Chief of Staff

6/24/2021

*Karen S. Spiegel*  
Supervisor Karen Spiegel, Chair

6/25/2021

*Chuck Wolf*  
Supervisor Chuck Washington, Supervisor 3rd District

6/25/2021

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MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

On motion of Supervisor Spiegel, seconded by Supervisor Jeffries and duly carried by unanimous vote, IT WAS ORDERED that the above matter is approved as recommended.

Ayes: Jeffries, Spiegel, Washington, Perez, and Hewitt  
Nays: None  
Absent: None  
Date: June 29, 2021  
xc: BOS-Dist. 2, BOS-Dist. 3, RUHS, DPSS  
D.A., EMD, EO, RUHS-PH, Probation, Sheriff

Kecia R. Harper  
Clerk of the Board

By: *[Signature]*

Deputy

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**BACKGROUND:**

Summary

In the midst of the deadliest opioid epidemic in history, an unprecedented rise in opioid overdose deaths is being largely contributed to a drug called fentanyl. Fentanyl is a strong synthetic opioid that is almost 80-100 times more potent than morphine, and about 50 times more potent as heroin. In pharmaceutical settings, fentanyl is typically prescribed to patients who suffer from chronic-pain, such as that associated with cancer diagnoses, or related end-of-life circumstances where their condition is terminal. While it is approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for medical use, most fentanyl distribution and consumption is illegal. When misused, fentanyl is extremely lethal and potentially deadly, even in very small amounts. It only takes about two milligrams of fentanyl to have potentially lethal consequences for most people. To put in perspective, it takes 5,000 milligrams to make on teaspoon.

Illicit drug makers are starting to use fentanyl in their manufacturing of other drugs such as heroin, cocaine, methamphetamine, and MDMA. This is because it takes very little to produce a high with fentanyl, making it a cheaper option. The production of fentanyl "laced" drugs is resulting in alarming numbers of accidental overdoses occurring when someone unknowingly ingests a drug containing fatal amounts of fentanyl.

Throughout the nation, overdose deaths involving fentanyl have quadrupled in recent years. In Riverside County, the Department of Public Health recorded 686 overdose deaths in 2020. Of those, 279 were fentanyl-related; up from 55 in 2018. To date, there have been 135 reported overdose deaths in Riverside County during 2021, with 43 of those being fentanyl-related.

Naloxone is a medicine that can be used to rapidly reverse a fentanyl overdose. It is an opioid antagonist which works by rapidly binding to opioid receptors to reverse and block the effects of opioid drugs. Naloxone can quickly restore normal breathing to a person if their breathing has slowed or stopped because of an opioid overdose. But, naloxone has no effect on someone who does not have opioids in their system and is not a treatment for Opioid Use Disorder.

RUHS-Public Health, through the Public Health Nursing Case Management Program, is partnering with Inland Harm Reduction to develop bystander naloxone training. Although traditionally administered by emergency response personnel, naloxone can be administered by minimally trained laypeople. To date, RUHS-Public Health has trained over 100 community partners on how to recognize an opioid overdose and how to appropriately respond with naloxone. The training program is in the process of more broadly launching to community members.

The dramatic increase in fentanyl-involved deaths highlights the need to expand prevention and response activities, while ensuring that people most at risk of overdose have access to care, by:

- Expanding distribution and use of naloxone and overdose prevention education.
- Expanding awareness about and access to, and availability of, treatment for substance use disorders.
- Early intervention with individuals at highest risk for overdose.



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- Improved detection of overdose outbreaks to facilitate more effective response.

Riverside County is leading the way in the State through our response to the opioid epidemic. RUHS-Public Health became one of California's first local health jurisdictions to establish an Overdose Fatality Review (OFR), with a mission to improve countywide overdose epidemiology and recommend initiatives to prevent new cases of drug addiction, overdose, and death.

In February 2021, the Riverside County District Attorney's (DA) Office became the first in Southern California to file a murder charge against a person suspected of selling fentanyl laced drugs resulting in someone's death.

To complement these efforts and identify any needs gaps, Supervisor Karen Spiegel and Supervisor Chuck Washington recommend the establishment of a multidisciplinary committee tasked with assessing the current state of fentanyl-involved overdoses and deaths within Riverside County. The committee will be comprised of representatives from the following Riverside County Departments: RUHS-Behavioral Health, DPSS, Office of the District Attorney, Emergency Management Division, Executive Office, RUHS-Public Health, Probation, and Sheriff's Department. The committee will assess current fentanyl awareness and education programming and overdose response efforts being undertaken by county departments, and will report back to the Board of Supervisors with a comprehensive analysis of existing resources and identified gaps. Reports will be made to the Board of Supervisors on a quarterly basis and will include the following:

- Recommendation detailing a countywide information and marketing/communicating campaign relating to opioid overdose prevention and the dangers of fentanyl. To include the incorporation of existing campaigns being conducted by individual county departments.
- Overview of current and potential sources of state and federal grant funding for fentanyl awareness and education.
- Targeted analysis of harm reduction efforts and assessment of naloxone training successes. Including any potential outreach to parent or family groups to make them aware of the signs of opioid abuse or addiction, the lethality of fentanyl, and the efficacy of naloxone in instances of related overdose.
- Expansion of training for Law Enforcement personnel on the risks of exposure to fentanyl through routine law-enforcement, emergency, or life-saving activities. Including an evaluation of current policies and procedures allowing administration of naloxone by law enforcement, and further means of facilitating widespread use by agencies throughout the county.

### **Impact on Residents and Businesses**

Residents will benefit from the expansion of a countywide campaign educating the public on the dangers of fentanyl and providing increased access to information and resources available to those suffering from opioid addiction. By establishing a multidisciplinary committee comprised of experts working directly in the fight against the opioid epidemic, the Board of Supervisors will be better able to target policy for the response to and mitigation and prevention of fentanyl-related

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overdoses, increasing the health and safety of our communities.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Resolution 2021-147

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**COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE**

**RESOLUTION NUMBER 2021-147**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE**

**DECLARING THE RIVERSIDE COUNTY FENTANYL AWARENESS CAMPAIGN AND  
ESTABLISHING A COUNTYWIDE MULTIDISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE TO ASSESS  
APPROPRIATE RESPONSE TO THE RAPIDLY INCREASING INSTANCES OF FENTANYL  
INVOLVED OVERDOSE AND DEATH**

WHEREAS, fentanyl is a Schedule II controlled substance as set forth in the Controlled Substances Act; and

WHEREAS, under medical supervision, fentanyl is used as both an anesthetic and for pain management. As an analgesic, fentanyl is 80-100 times more potent than morphine and 30-50 percent more potent than heroin; and

WHEREAS, fentanyl is diverted for illicit use by pharmacy theft, illegal distribution by patients and registrants, fraudulent prescriptions, and clandestine manufacturing; and

WHEREAS, fentanyl is often mixed with other drugs including heroin, cocaine, methamphetamine, and illicitly manufactured pills without the user's knowledge; and

WHEREAS, illicit users commonly administer fentanyl by injection. However, like heroin, fentanyl may be smoked or snorted. In addition, fentanyl can be absorbed into the body by inhalation, oral exposure/ingestion, or skin contact. If fentanyl comes in contact with skin, it can be subsequently transferred by inadvertent touching of the mouth, nose, or other mucous membranes; and

WHEREAS, inadvertent contact with fentanyl causes a significant public safety danger for law enforcement personnel and first responders who come into contact with the substance. The

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1 adverse effects of accidental or improper contact with fentanyl include rapid (within minutes) and  
2 profound disorientation, respiratory distress, and even cardiac arrest; and

3 WHEREAS, the number of overdose deaths in Riverside County involving fentanyl have  
4 doubled every year since 2015 and are on track to double in 2021; and

5 WHEREAS, the biological effects of fentanyl are indistinguishable from heroin, except  
6 that fentanyl may be hundreds of times more potent than heroin; and

7 WHEREAS, when a person consumes another drug which has been laced with fentanyl,  
8 they are at extreme risk of accidental overdose or death due to its overwhelming potency; and

9 WHEREAS, due to its rapid rate of absorption into the body, as little as 0.1 to 0.15 mg  
10 (the size of a few grains of table salt) of pure fentanyl can be deadly; and

11 WHEREAS, in the event of a fentanyl overdose, naloxone is an opioid antagonist and  
12 antidote that may be administered to restore breathing quickly and effectively. Higher doses, or  
13 several doses, of naloxone may be necessary for fentanyl overdoses; and

14 WHEREAS, Riverside County is leading the way in the state through our response to the  
15 opioid epidemic. Riverside University Health System (RUHS) - Public Health became one of  
16 California's first local health jurisdictions to establish an Overdose Fatality Review (OFR), with a  
17 mission to improve countywide overdose epidemiology and recommend initiatives to prevent  
18 new cases of drug addiction, overdose, and death; and

19 WHEREAS, in February 2021, the Riverside County District Attorney's (DA) office  
20 became the first in Southern California to file a murder charge against a person suspected of  
21 selling fentanyl laced drugs, resulting in someone's death; and

22 NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Riverside County Board of Supervisors,  
23 in complement of these efforts, desires to establish a multidisciplinary committee for the purpose  
24 of assessing the current state of fentanyl-involved overdoses and deaths within Riverside  
25 County, and establishing a recommended countywide communications campaign to inform the  
26 public of the dangers of fentanyl and risks of opioid related overdose; and

27 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the committee shall be comprised of representatives  
28 from the following county Departments, to be selected by the Department Head: RUHS—



1 Behavioral Health, Department of Public Social Services, Office of the District Attorney,  
2 Emergency Management Division, Executive Office, RUHS – Public Health, Probation, and  
3 Sheriff's Department; and

4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the committee shall provide reports to the Board of  
5 Supervisors on a quarterly basis, advising as to ongoing efforts being undertaken throughout  
6 county departments in the fight against fentanyl abuse, identifying gaps in our response efforts  
7 and recommended solutions, providing targeted analysis of harm reduction efforts and  
8 assessment of community and county partner naloxone training successes, and overseeing  
9 current and potential sources of state and federal grant funding for continued fentanyl abuse  
10 awareness and education.

11  
12 ROLL CALL:

13  
14 Ayes: Jeffries, Spiegel, Washington, Perez, and Hewitt

15 Nays:

16 Absent:

17  
18 The foregoing is certified to be a true copy of a resolution duly adopted by said Board of  
19 Supervisors on the date therein set forth.

20  
21 KECIA R. HARPER, Clerk of said Board

22  
23 By:  \_\_\_\_\_

24 Deputy  
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