



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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CONTACT:

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

press@cityofchicago.org

CITY OF CHICAGO ANNOUNCES NEW INITIATIVES TO COMBAT THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC USING FUNDS FROM SETTLEMENTS WITH PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANIES

Estimated \$78M will be available in Chicago for programs that address the opioid crisis

CHICAGO — Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot and the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) announced today that the City of Chicago will implement new initiatives to address the ongoing opioid epidemic using funding from settlements with the three largest pharmaceutical distributors: McKesson; Cardinal Health and AmerisourceBergen; and manufacturer Janssen Pharmaceuticals, Inc. and its parent company Johnson & Johnson. These settlements provide substantial funds to states and municipalities to address the ongoing opioid epidemic and resulting public health crisis across the country.

"This funding presents an important opportunity to address a public health issue that continues to plague communities across Chicago and especially those on our South and West Sides," said Mayor Lightfoot. "I look forward to working with CDPH to deepen our social safety net for those grappling with substance use disorders as well as strengthen our city's defenses against the opioid epidemic."

The Illinois Remediation Fund will receive 55% of the settlement proceeds, estimated at \$437M over eighteen years, and will be administered by the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) for programs and purposes that address the opioid crisis throughout Illinois. The Illinois Opioid Advisory Board will make recommendations to the state regarding the use of these funds.

The other 45% of the settlement proceeds will be distributed among the state, counties, municipalities, and townships. The Illinois Attorney General's Office estimates that Chicago will receive approximately \$78M over eighteen years.

With the new funding, the Office of Mayor Lightfoot and CDPH will develop and expand programs in the following categories:



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- **Low-Barrier Harm Reduction Access**, including distribution of naloxone (Narcan), fentanyl test strips, and other drug checking supplies, support to community syringe service programs and harm reduction outreach interventions, and other innovative harm reduction pilot programs.
- **Linkage to Care and Treatment for Substance Use Disorder**, including expansion of the novel, immediate access to opioid treatment program — Medication Assisted Recovery (MAR) NOW — as well as treatment programs that address polysubstance use and provide services for stimulant use disorder (i.e. methamphetamine, cocaine) and alcohol, sedatives, cannabis, and steroids and other addictive substances.
- **Long-Term Supports for People in Recovery**, including recovery-oriented housing options and recovery communities.
- **Public Safety Partnerships** with Chicago Police and Fire Departments and Cook County Sheriff's Office to provide behavioral health treatment and linkages to care for people who interact with public safety systems and are at particularly high risk of overdose.
- **Education, Communication, & Outreach** to inform community partners and the public about substance use, harm reduction and overdose prevention, and treatment options in order to reduce stigma related to substance use disorders.
- **Expanded Data Analysis, Epidemiology, & Geographic Analytics** to allow CDPH and partners to make data-driven decisions about overdose prevention programming and measure the impact of these interventions on substance use and overdose trends.

According to provisional data from the Cook County Medical Examiner's Office, 1,428 opioid-related overdose fatalities occurred in Chicago in 2021. This is the highest number ever recorded and is higher than the number of Chicago's traffic crash fatalities and homicides combined. Final data for 2022 is pending but numbers are expected to be similar. Opioid overdose is one of the primary drivers of the 10-year life expectancy gap between Black and white Chicagoans.

"Opioid overdose is not a moral failing, rather a medical problem that is treatable and largely preventable," said CDPH Commissioner Allison Arwady, M.D. "This funding is critical as we further expand treatment and recovery services and reduce stigma across this city."



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CDPH has several efforts underway to address the opioid crisis affecting Chicago. These include a partnership with the state to make medication to treat opioid use disorder immediately available via telephone hotline; a partnership with Chicago Public Libraries to distribute harm reduction kits in all local libraries; installation of harm reduction vending machines in 5 locations throughout the city, and the launch of an opioid response team as part of the City's [Crisis Assistance Response and Engagement \(CARE\)](#) 911 alternative response program.

For additional information about CDPH's substance use services, visit OvercomeOpioids.com or contact the Office of Substance Use at: osu.cdph@cityofchicago.org or call the IL Helpline for Opioids at 833-234-6343 and be connected immediately to same-day opioid use disorder treatment.

To view a map of all publicly available Narcan in the city, visit: bit.ly/FindNarcan.

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