



BRAWLEY CITY COUNCILMAN GIL REBOLLAR

PRESS RELEASE

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Brawley City Council Unanimously Approves Letter Requesting that Illicit Fentanyl be Declared a Countywide Public Health Crisis

Brawley, CA – On Tuesday, February 21, at their regular city council meeting, the Brawley City Council unanimously approved a letter, authored by Councilman Gil Rebollar, for the County Board of Supervisors to declare illicit fentanyl a public health crisis.

The letter also contains data pertaining to the national impacts fentanyl has had on society, as well as local data revealing the highest age-related overdose death rates in the County being in the Northend within the communities of Westmorland (#1), Niland (#2), and Brawley (#4).

In addition to the recommendation of declaring fentanyl a public health crisis, the letter also recommends the following actions be taken:

- Collect and compile data on opioid and fentanyl-related arrests, seizures, overdoses, and fatalities in Imperial County, and prepare a report on current impacts to community services.
- Through the Imperial County Public Health Department, Behavioral Health Services, Imperial County Sheriff's Office, and District Attorney, a countywide information and marketing/communication campaign relating to opioid overdose prevention and the dangers of fentanyl. To include the incorporation of existing campaigns being conducted by individual county/city departments, boards, committees, and/or task forces.
- Coordinate and host, this calendar year, a panel/discussion on the fentanyl crisis, similar to the Colorado River Summit and Future of Healthcare in Imperial County Roundtable.
- Conduct an 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/Fire Department/EMS personnel on the risks of exposure to fentanyl through routine law-enforcement, emergency, or life-saving activities.
- Work with the Imperial County Sheriff's and District Attorney's Offices to prioritize continuing to enforce fentanyl sales related crimes to the fullest extent permissible and booking into jail those arrested for fentanyl sales crimes, as permitted by law and applicable regulations.
- Work with Imperial County District Attorney and regional partners to track cases, prosecuted, and convictions won on fentanyl sales crimes.
- Work with the Imperial County District Attorney to request the court to order geographic probation and stay away orders for offenders with multiple drug sales convictions and seeking homicide or manslaughter charges when sales result in an overdose death.

"Substance abuse, addiction, and the War on Drugs has impacted me and my family on a personal level and I always told myself that if ever was in a position of power or influence that I would do something about it, or at the very least try," stated Rebollar. "This letter essentially tries to start a county-wide conversation on a very deep topic that impacts so many within our Valley. Although there needs to be a prioritized emphasis on law enforcement and just punishment for those poisoning our streets and communities, a lot more also needs to be done to ensure access to treatment and recovery for those suffering with addiction and substance abuse."

The letter can be read in its entirety in the attached document, and the meeting discussion can be viewed at the following link: <https://fb.watch/iR-vrriB2D/>

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