

**BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON**

RESOLUTION NO. 2024-005

To Adopt a 90-Day Emergency to Address the Fentanyl Crisis.

The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners Finds:

A. Multnomah County is authorized under ORS 401.305 to act as an emergency management agency, including authority to establish policies and protocols for defining and directing responsibilities during times of emergency.

B. Multnomah County has enacted a local ordinance, Multnomah County Code § 25.410 et seq., pursuant to the authority granted by ORS 401.025 et seq. and the Multnomah County Charter.

C. Emergency circumstances created by the fentanyl crisis pose a significant risk to public health, safety, and the continuity of essential services. These circumstances emerged in our ongoing prevention, harm reduction, treatment, recovery, and coordination efforts to address fentanyl substance use and drug overdoses in our county.

D. The State of Oregon, Multnomah County, City of Portland, and other partners must address the fentanyl crisis impacting our community through a coordinated approach by the entities with authority and responsibility for providing public safety, behavioral health and public health services, crisis response and other resources to those impacted in our community.

E. In Multnomah County, the number of overdose fatalities from any drug doubled from 2018-2022. Of those overdoses, fatalities specifically involving fentanyl increased 533% during the same time period. Moreover, polysubstance use has become significantly more common. Approximately 55% of overdoses in 2022 involved more than one substance, compared to 22% in 2020. The profound increase in overdose and fatalities reflects changes in the potency of substances and the methods of substance delivery, compounded by social factors like increased isolation, economic challenges, housing shortages/instability, and systemic racism.

In addition, studies show younger people mistakenly believe they are less likely to suffer harm or die from fentanyl use and officials report young people find pills especially appealing because they are cheap and more socially acceptable than meth or heroin.

To compound these issues, a 2022 Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU) report indicates notable gaps in prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery services in Multnomah County, including:

- 98% gap in prevention specialists
- 48% gap in prescription drug dropoff sites/services
- 42% gap in school classroom-based prevention programming
- 76% gap in organizations/services offering fentanyl test strips
- 16% gap in outpatient treatment services
- 16% gap in residential detox services
- 83% gap in recovery community centers
- 88% gap in qualified mental health providers

Addiction is a chronic disease that changes the brain and alters decision-making. With the right treatment and support people can and do recover. A lack of treatment facilities and long waits leave people unsupported and in limbo, forced to choose between getting sober and being able to start treatment.

F. Given this grave and urgent situation, the State of Oregon, Multnomah County, and City of Portland are jointly requesting a state of emergency to address fentanyl substance use. That said, it is crucial to promptly initiate one or more contracts to effectively respond to these emerging conditions and coordinate efforts with the State of Oregon, Oregon Health Authority, City of Portland, and other partners.

G. The gravity of the situation demands immediate action to protect the well-being of our community and effectively address the complex issue of substance use in Multnomah County.

H. An emergency is declared for the entire County.

I. All local resources have not been expended.

J. The following additional actions are authorized under Multnomah County Code Chapter 25:

- A. The Chair is authorized to take all necessary steps authorized by law to coordinate response and recovery from this emergency, including, but not limited to, requesting assistance from the State of Oregon and other partners.

B. Purchasing rules will be suspended under the authority provided in the County's Public Contract Review Board (PCRB) rules 49-0150 (*Emergency Contract Procedure*) and 47-0280 (*Emergency Procurements/Contracts*), and ORS 279B.080.

K. This declaration of emergency shall expire 90 days after adoption, unless rescinded or extended further.

The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners Resolves:

To adopt a 90-Day Emergency to Address the Fentanyl Crisis.

ADOPTED this 1st day of February, 2024.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON



Jessica Vega Pederson, Chair

REVIEWED:
JENNY M. MADKOUR, COUNTY ATTORNEY
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

By 

Jenny M. Madkour, County Attorney

SUBMITTED BY: Jessica Vega Pederson, County Chair