



LOS ANGELES COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

SACRAMENTO LEGISLATIVE OFFICE

GEORGE GASCÓN • District Attorney
JOSEPH F. INIGUEZ • Chief Deputy District Attorney

DANIEL FELIZZATTO • Legislative Advocate
TAMAR TOKAT • Legislative Advocate

July 18, 2024

The Honorable Juan Alanis
California State Assembly
1021 O Street, Suite 4640
Sacramento, CA 95814

ASSEMBLY BILL 1859 (ALANIS) SUPPORT

Dear Assembly Member Alanis:

The Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office is pleased to support Assembly Bill 1859.

AB 1859 would require a coroner to test the bodily fluid of a deceased person for the presence of xylazine if the coroner reasonably suspects the person died from an accidental or intentional opioid overdose or if the person was administered an overdose intervention drug prior to death and was unresponsive to the drug. AB 1859 would also require the coroner to report a positive result to the State Department of Public Health (DPH) and the Overdose Detection Mapping Application Program.

As part of DPH's Opioid Prevention Initiative, DPH maintains the California Overdose Surveillance Dashboard (dashboard). The Dashboard tracks deaths related to any opioid overdose, deaths related specifically to fentanyl, emergency department visits related to any opioid overdose, and the number of prescriptions issued for opioids in California. The data for deaths comes from death certificate data from DPH's Center for Health Statistics and Informatics, both preliminary quarterly data and the Comprehensive Master Death File that is filed annually. The data for emergency department visits and hospitalizations comes from annual hospital Emergency Care Data Record reports and hospital discharge data reports collected and maintained by the Department of Health Care Access and Information. However, due to the time lag of the source data for this information, the overdose data available on the dashboard for both deaths and emergency department visits/hospitalizations is only finalized for 2021, with preliminary data available through the second quarter of 2022. According to the Dashboard, there were 7,385 deaths related to opioids (6,473 involved fentanyl), and 21,316 emergency department visits for opioid overdoses, for the year 2022.

In 1988, Congress created the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) program to provide assistance to federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies operating in areas determined to be critical drug-trafficking regions of the United States. There are currently 33 HIDTAs, including four in California: Central Valley, Northern California, Los Angeles, and San Diego/Imperial Valley.

In January of 2017, the Washington/Baltimore HIDTA launched ODMAP as a response to

1100 K Street, Suite 404
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 442-0668
Fax: (916) 444-8729

July 18, 2024
Page Two

the lack of a consistent methodology to track overdoses, which limited the ability to understand and mobilize against the crisis. According to the Washington/Baltimore HIDTA, ODMAP is an overdose mapping tool that allows first responders to log an overdose in real time into a centralized database in order to support public safety and public health efforts to mobilize an immediate response to a sudden increase, or spike, in overdose events. ODMAP is only available to government agencies serving the interest of public safety and health, and each agency wishing to use the system must sign a participation agreement designed to protect the data within the system. The system currently serves more than 3,700 agencies with more than 28,000 users in all 50 states and has logged 850,000 overdose events. According to the Washington/Baltimore HIDTA, there are seventeen states with statewide implementation strategies, including several with legislation requiring reporting to ODMAP.

Last year SB 67 (Seyarto), Chapter 859, Statutes of 2023, was enacted and requires coroners to report overdose information to ODMAP. (See Health and Saf. Code, § 11758.04.) SB 67 did not specify or limit the types of controlled substances which could be involved in the overdose.

The Governor has stated that California needs to be more proactive in combating the use of xylazine (Tranq) to ensure that we do not experience a fentanyl-like public health and safety crisis.

The ability to accurately track overdose deaths is very important and valuable. Those statistics can help law enforcement and California public health agencies understand the extent of various drug crises.

For these reasons, our Office is pleased to support Assembly Bill 1859.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact Daniel Felizzatto in my Sacramento Legislative Office at (916) 442-0668.

Very truly yours,



GEORGE GASCÓN
District Attorney