



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

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Title: In Support of Funding a Supervised Consumption Site.

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Agenda Text

In Support of Funding a Supervised Consumption Site.

Official Text

WHEREAS The Massachusetts Department of Public Health released data indicating that 2,234 Massachusetts residents died of overdoses in 2021, an increase of nearly 9% from the previous year; and

WHEREAS At least 108 Somerville residents have died of opioid-related overdoses since 2015, which makes annual overdoses the top cause of preventable deaths among Somerville residents; and

WHEREAS The City of Somerville has methodically taken steps to thoughtfully establish a supervised consumption site (SCS) since 2019 in order to respond to a growing number of fatal overdoses in the city, including by engaging local partners, holding community forums, and instituting advisory committees that have ultimately produced two reports on the need for a SCS; and

WHEREAS Data shows that supervised consumption sites are a proven and effective tool for reducing overdose deaths, which have produced zero overdose deaths at over 120 SCSs around the world; and

WHEREAS People who use a SCS are 35% more likely to seek addiction treatment compared to those who do not; and

WHEREAS The establishment of a SCS produces positive benefits for communities, including reduced spending associated with ambulance rides, emergency room visits and hospitalizations after an overdose, decreased spread of soft tissue infections,

endocarditis, HIV, and Hepatitis B/C due to the increased use of sterile syringes, and the reduction or elimination of unsupervised consumption of opioids in restrooms and parks; and

WHEREAS Statehouse bills S.1272/H.2088, also known as An Act Relative to Preventing Overdose Deaths And Increasing Access to Treatment, would institute a 10-year pilot period for communities to establish SCSs, create statewide regulations for SCSs, and eliminate criminal liabilities for all medically necessary activities associated with running a SCS; and

WHEREAS This Council not only believes that the City of Somerville is well-positioned to be the first municipality in Massachusetts and the second in the United States to pilot a supervised consumption site, but also that it has a moral and ethical duty to do everything in its power to end the preventable, public health crisis and policy failure of overdoses; **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT**

RESOLVED That this Council urge the Administration to immediately allocate ARPA funds toward the establishment of a Supervised Consumption Site to the specifications of the newest report from the Supervised Consumption Site Committee, which Councilor Burnley serves on alongside medical experts, those who use drugs, and those in recovery; and **AND BE IT FURTHER**

RESOLVED That the City of Somerville calls on the statehouse to pass An Act Relative to Preventing Overdose Deaths And Increasing Access to Treatment so that our neighbors no longer have to mourn their friends, siblings, and children who were lost too soon.