

Sarah Mayer *Public Comment - Safe Launch*

From: Janet Rowse <janet@janetrowse.com>
Sent: Saturday, March 30, 2024 9:10 AM
To: sbcob
Cc: jam3768
Subject: Letter to Board of Supervisors re: Apr. 2 Agenda
Attachments: SB BOS Letter - Support Project Opioid.pdf

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March 30, 2024

To: Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors

Das Williams, Laura Capps, Joan Hartman, Steve Lavagnino, and Bob Nelson,

On behalf of the primary addiction prevention organization SafeLaunch, I'm writing in support of Sheriff Bill Brown's continuing efforts to reduce the rate of addiction and death in our county and ask that you fully fund Project Opioid to the greatest level.

The organizations that make up the Project Opioid Committee are united in their efforts to reduce drug use, improve recovery outcomes, and save lives. Underfunding the enforcement budget of the Sheriff's department has worsened the crisis, caused untold family suffering and made our communities less safe.

For the record, board members and colleagues of SafeLaunch have been regular attendees of and presenters to the Project Opioid Committee. In each of these presentations, we've provided the statistical fact that in nine out of ten cases, addiction starts with substance use initiated before age 18. Addiction is a highly preventable, adolescent onset disease.

Our local and national prevention partners have much in common. We implement youth drug and alcohol prevention programs on shoestring budgets. We are in the underdog position of pushing back against legislation that harms vulnerable populations while increasing the bottom lines of the addiction for profit industries which fuel political campaigns.

This state of affairs isn't new, but headline grabbing statistics are:

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- 110,000 overdose deaths in 2023
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- Highly addictive, synthetic drugs like Fentanyl,
- the animal tranquilizer Xylazine, and methamphetamines are more accessible and cheaper
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- Illegal, highly potent THC products made
- from hemp are sold in smoke shops
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- Hard-to-detect, novel drug delivery systems,
- like vape pens, deliver unknown potencies with unregulated ingredients flood the market
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- China sells precursor chemicals (the ingredients)
- to Mexico to make the synthetic drugs that are killing Americans in record numbers
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- Direct to consumer marketing of pharmaceutical
- drugs informs consumers that there's a drug for every problem
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-
-
- Snapchat and other online platforms sell
- cheap illegal drugs containing Fentanyl to adults and minors, killing them instantly
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- THC poisonings in children ages 0-12
- increased 3,311% from 2016 to 2022
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These are some of the effects of failed local, state, and federal policies that resulted in a 51% increase in overdoses in our county in the last three years.

A revitalized comprehensive approach, including drug demand reduction and supply reduction, is required. These strategies begin with implementation of universal *primary prevention* education programs like Drug Free Clubs in every school, and for the 10% who develop substance use disorder as adults, increased access to treatment and recovery programs-- *especially for people who find their way into the justice system*. For tens of thousands of people, that system is their only path to recovery. Housing, employment, and a healthy family are unsustainable for anyone suffering from addiction.

Naloxone can reverse opiate overdoses and clean needles can reduce harm. But, addiction doesn't start with overdose, it ends there. Youth are under assault by the addiction for profit industries and legislation that allows legal businesses to flourish and makes illegal businesses

harder to detect. These industries target youth with addictive products that look, smell, and taste like fruits and candies in slick packaging. The products mimic brand names attractive to youth that can be purchased by anyone in smoke/vape shops or online.

Two of the county's most vulnerable constituent groups, youth with not yet developed brains, and adults who suffer from substance use disorder, deserve your full support and commitment. Sheriff Brown and his officers do everything possible to protect the community. I urge you to fulfill the Sheriff's request and increase their department's capacity to provide the urgently needed health response that the people in our county deserve and expect.

Thank you for reading my comments.

Sincerely,

Janet Rowse
Co-founder SafeLaunch

Attachment: Santa Barbara BOS Letter - Support Project Opioid

Janet Rowse
SafeLaunch

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- Highly addictive, synthetic drugs like Fentanyl, the animal tranquilizer Xylazine, and methamphetamines are more accessible and cheaper
- Illegal, highly potent THC products made from hemp are sold in smoke shops
- Hard-to-detect, novel drug delivery systems, like vape pens, deliver unknown potencies with unregulated ingredients flood the market
- China sells precursor chemicals (the ingredients) to Mexico to make the synthetic drugs that are killing Americans in record numbers
- Direct to consumer marketing of pharmaceutical drugs informs consumers that there's a drug for every problem
- Snapchat and other online platforms sell cheap illegal drugs containing Fentanyl to adults and minors, killing them instantly
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