

From: Martin, Kevin <KMartin@ci.lompoc.ca.us>
Sent: Tuesday, April 2, 2024 1:26 PM
To: sbcob
Subject: Opioid Crisis
Attachments: Signed Opioid.pdf

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For your review

Kevin M. Martin

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LOMPOC POLICE DEPARTMENT

"Where Service is Tradition"

KEVIN MARTIN

Chief of Police

March 2, 2024

Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors
105 E Anapamu Street, Fourth Floor, Room 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Subject: Urgent Call for Action on Overdose and Fentanyl Crisis in Santa Barbara County

Dear Board Members,

I am writing to you today not only as the Chief of Police for Lompoc but as a concerned member of our county, deeply concerned by the alarming rise in overdose and fentanyl-related deaths across Santa Barbara County. This letter acknowledges our current crisis, outlines our collaborative efforts, and urgently calls for enhanced support and resources to combat this escalating threat.

Our county is grappling with a disturbing rise in overdose fatalities, notably driven by the increasing prevalence of fentanyl. The statistics are not just numbers; they represent lives lost, families shattered, and a community in mourning. The stark reality is that Santa Barbara County has seen overdose deaths skyrocket by 51% over the past three years, with fentanyl-related fatalities climbing by 43% during the same period.

In response, the Lompoc Police Department, in partnership with the Santa Barbara Sheriff's Office and other key stakeholders, has been at the forefront of addressing this crisis. We are committed to combating this epidemic through collaborative enforcement, education, and prevention strategies. However, the scale of this crisis demands even greater concerted effort and resources.

Our data analysis reveals a concerning trend, with the most significant impact observed among white males aged 35 to 54. However, we cannot ignore the growing vulnerability among females and the Hispanic populations. Additionally, geographical analysis indicates shifting patterns in overdose and fentanyl-related deaths between our northern and southern regions, with some areas witnessing marked increases in fatalities.

Despite our best efforts, we face a critical enforcement gap due to diminished resources. The Opioid Settlements many jurisdictions have received do not allow Law Enforcement to fund enforcement teams. This restriction is unfortunate as all of us struggle financially. The funding gap hinders our ability to effectively manage the crisis, especially at a time when illicit drugs are deadlier than ever before. The need for additional funding and personnel to strengthen our narcotics enforcement capabilities cannot be overstated.

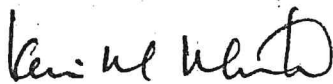
We commend the existing community efforts, including prevention, education, treatment, and harm reduction programs, which have shown promising results. Successful collaborative initiatives within the community underscore the potential of united action against this menace. I believe these programs will be much more successful when Law Enforcement is better funded to hold those dealing and supplying accountable.

The annual number of opioid-related deaths rose from 72 in 2016 to 164 in 2022, highlighting the accelerating crisis. In particular, *fentanyl's role in overdose deaths increased from about 25% of all opioid overdoses in 2020 to one-half in 2021 and then to two-thirds by 2022.* I know Sheriff Brown will be presenting this issue to the Board and will be able to provide county-wide numbers to you in 2023. I expect you will see even greater numbers than I shared in this letter. I urge the Board of Supervisors to prioritize enforcement resources in the upcoming budget hearings and advocate for robust support towards Project Opioid Santa Barbara County, amplifying our collective advocacy efforts to combat this crisis.

The severity of the overdose crisis cannot be overstated by public safety, and the time for decisive action is now. I am grateful for the opportunity to address this critical issue with the Board and offer the Lompoc Police Department's continued support in addressing this crisis. Together, we can make a difference, save lives, and restore our community's well-being in the county.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,



KEVIN M. MARTIN

Chief of Police