
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 214 Session of
2023

INTRODUCED BY MARCELL, HOGAN, GIRAL, HEFFLEY, M. JONES,
KAUFFMAN, KIM, KINSEY, KUZMA, LABS, R. MACKENZIE, PICKETT,
ROWE AND STRUZZI, SEPTEMBER 21, 2023

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES, SEPTEMBER 21, 2023

A RESOLUTION

1 Designating the week of September 18 through 24, 2023, as
2 "Opioid and Heroin Epidemic Awareness Week" in Pennsylvania.

3 WHEREAS, The heroin and opioid epidemic continues to be a
4 major public health challenge in this Commonwealth and
5 nationally; and

6 WHEREAS, In the early 1990s, prescription opioids became a
7 popular course of treatment for chronic and acute pain; and

8 WHEREAS, Data indicates that approximately 80% of new heroin
9 users began their drug use with prescription opioids, usually
10 legally prescribed; and

11 WHEREAS, Nearly every community in this Commonwealth has been
12 traumatically affected by the opioid and heroin epidemic, which
13 has transformed neighborhoods, left children without parents,
14 torn families apart and taken the lives of young adults; and

15 WHEREAS, The opioid and heroin overdose crisis is not
16 exclusive to urban communities, as rural families and
17 communities have also been impacted; and

1 WHEREAS, In 2022, there were 4,703 overdoses in this
2 Commonwealth, with 66 of 67 counties reporting at least one
3 overdose and Erie, Columbia, Fulton and Cambria Counties having
4 the highest per capita number of overdoses; and

5 WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia experienced 1,276 overdose
6 deaths in 2021 according to data from the Philadelphia
7 Department of Health, with 82% of the 2021 overdose deaths
8 including fentanyl; and

9 WHEREAS, In 2021, Allegheny County experienced 719 overdose
10 deaths, an increase in 30 deaths over the final number in 2020
11 of 689, or a 5% increase; and

12 WHEREAS, In 2019, a total of 1,608 cases of neonatal
13 abstinence syndrome were reported by the Department of Health;
14 and

15 WHEREAS, This Commonwealth's foster care system has also been
16 impacted by the opioid and heroin epidemic, with 7,214 children
17 placed in foster care between October 2020 through September
18 2021 because of parental drug abuse; and

19 WHEREAS, In 2019, it was estimated that the total financial
20 impact of the opioid and heroin epidemic to the criminal justice
21 system in this Commonwealth was \$53 million per year, adjusted
22 to 2017 dollars; and

23 WHEREAS, The growth of fentanyl and xylazine has complicated
24 efforts to address the opioid and heroin epidemic; and

25 WHEREAS, In response to the opioid and heroin epidemic, the
26 Commonwealth instituted a variety of prevention and intervention
27 strategies to combat substance use disorder and accidental drug
28 overdose; and

29 WHEREAS, In 2014, the General Assembly passed legislation for
30 the Commonwealth's prescription drug monitoring program, which

1 provides prescribing practitioners further oversight regarding
2 the prescription history of patients to better protect the
3 health of patients and the safety of communities; and

4 WHEREAS, In 2016, the General Assembly passed legislation
5 directing the State's medical boards to develop regulations to
6 implement a curriculum for the safe prescription of controlled
7 substances containing an opioid; and

8 WHEREAS, In 2016, the General Assembly also passed
9 legislation giving patients the right to complete a patient
10 voluntary nonopioid directive to refuse the prescribing or
11 administration of a controlled substance containing an opioid;
12 and

13 WHEREAS, In 2016, the General Assembly also passed
14 legislation that limits the amount of controlled substances
15 containing an opioid that can be prescribed to a minor, limiting
16 that amount in most circumstances to a seven-day supply; and

17 WHEREAS, In 2016, the General Assembly also passed
18 legislation to ensure that individuals who are at risk of
19 experiencing an opioid-related overdose or the family members or
20 friends of those individuals can obtain naloxone, an overdose
21 reversal drug, without a prescription; and

22 WHEREAS, Single county authorities across this Commonwealth
23 have developed policies and procedures to ensure a "warm
24 handoff" of survivors of opioid and heroin-related drug
25 overdoses to provide a simplified pathway from overdose to
26 treatment and to prevent relapse; and

27 WHEREAS, Efforts must be made to extinguish the debilitating
28 stigma that surrounds mental health and behavioral health,
29 including substance use disorder, which so often deters
30 individuals from seeking treatment; therefore be it

1 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives designate the
2 week of September 18 through 24, 2023, as "Opioid and Heroin
3 Epidemic Awareness Week" in Pennsylvania; and be it further

4 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives acknowledge the
5 devastating impact that the opioid and heroin epidemic has
6 inflicted on this Commonwealth; and be it further

7 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives continue to work
8 to find solutions to the opioid and heroin epidemic and the
9 prevention of substance use disorder; and be it further

10 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives continue to raise
11 awareness of the possible consequences of the misuse and abuse
12 of opioids, other controlled substances and prescription drugs;
13 and be it further

14 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives encourage all
15 Pennsylvanians to remember and stand with individuals, families
16 and communities that have been adversely impacted by the opioid
17 and heroin epidemic.