



Legislation Text

File #: 2019-0390, **Version:** 1

A MOTION requesting the executive to develop, implement and report on a pilot program to notify physicians and other medical professionals of patients' deaths when opioid medication is determined to be the primary or a contributing cause.

WHEREAS, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, from 1999 to 2017, more than seven hundred thousand people have died from a drug overdose, and

WHEREAS, according to public health - Seattle & King County and the University of Washington's Alcohol and Drug Abuse Institute, in 2018, two hundred twenty seven deaths involved in King County involved opioids, and

WHEREAS, in 2016, the King County executive and the mayors of the cities of Auburn, Renton and Seattle convened a heroin and prescription opiate addiction task force to develop short and long term strategies to prevent opioid use disorder, prevent overdose, and improve access to treatment and other supportive services for individuals experiencing opioid use disorder, and

WHEREAS, the task force met over a six-month period and included participants representing various cities, the county, the University of Washington Alcohol and Drug Abuse Institute, behavioral health services providers, hospitals, human service agencies, the recovery community, criminal justice partners, first responders and other stakeholders, and

WHEREAS, the task force issued the Heroin and Prescription Opiate Addiction Task Force Final Report and Recommendations on September 15, 2016, and

WHEREAS, raising awareness and knowledge of the possible adverse effects of opioid use was recommended in the task force report to help prevent opioid use disorder, and

WHEREAS, San Diego County's chief deputy medical examiner participated in a study published in the journal Science in 2018 that found that clinicians who received notification of their patients' deaths by overdose reduced their prescribing of opioid medications, and

WHEREAS, the Los Angeles County board of supervisors approved a motion in October 2018 directing the chief medical examiner-coroner and the county health officer to implement a prescriber notification process;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

A. The King County council requests that the executive assess and report to the council on the feasibility of implementing a process for notifying medical prescribers following an opioid overdose-related death. The assessment and report should be developed in consultation with stakeholders, such as the American Medical Association. The report should include the proposed notification letter and a description of how a prescriber notification process could be implemented.

B. The King County executive is requested to transmit the report no later than one year from the date of passage of this motion. The report should be filed in the form of a paper original and an electronic copy with the clerk of the council, who shall retain the original and provide an electronic copy to all councilmembers, the council chief of staff and the lead staff to the health, housing and human services committee or its successor.