



Dear Team DPH,

While fentanyl-driven overdoses continue to be a pressing public health issue nationwide, San Francisco is seeing fatal overdose rates decline and admissions in DPH treatment programs rise.

For the past two years, DPH has aggressively expanded the behavioral healthcare system to make it easier than ever to access substance use disorder treatment and to give people more treatment options at every stage of recovery.

- We've added more than 70 service hours per week at our treatment centers and entry points such as the Behavioral Health Access Center.
- We've added approximately 400 residential treatment and care beds, including recovery housing for people transitioning out of residential programs.
- We've more than tripled our street teams in the community, working every day to connect people to treatment, including adding a Night Navigation team.
- We are increasing the capacity of our opioid treatment programs and implementing innovative ways to start methadone and buprenorphine treatment.
- We've nearly doubled the number of contingency management programs for people with stimulant use disorder.

Lives are being saved.

Fatal overdoses in San Francisco are down 20 percent in January through August compared to the first eight months of 2024. In August 2024, the most recent count available, there were approximately 50 percent fewer overdoses compared to the same month last year.

At the same time, treatment admissions are up, and more people are accessing lifesaving medications through DPH.

Residential substance use treatment admissions rose 35 percent in FY 2023-24 over the previous fiscal year. Buprenorphine prescriptions filled by our behavioral health pharmacy are up 46 percent. Methadone treatment admissions increased 32 percent in the last year.

We hope our treatment numbers will continue to rise with the expansion of our telehealth service. Now, anyone who calls the Behavioral Health Access Line at 888-246-3333 between 8 a.m. and midnight will have the option to immediately talk to a telehealth provider who can prescribe them buprenorphine or refer them to a methadone program.

This new service has expanded from the Night Navigator telehealth program, which helped people in the Tenderloin access a medical professional for medications. Since March, these navigators facilitated more than 1,400 telehealth visits, resulting in hundreds of people starting lifesaving medication treatment.

This innovative program is just one example of how DPH is implementing novel and responsive care for people who use drugs in the fentanyl era.

Thank you, DPH, for continuing to be compassionate and persistent in providing excellent care for our community.

With gratitude,

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