



MILWAUKEE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Supervisor Sylvia Ortiz-Velez - District 12

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Supervisor Ortiz-Velez Resolution Supporting Fentanyl Testing Strip Legalization Advances

MILWAUKEE – Supervisor Sylvia Ortiz-Velez is calling on the State of Wisconsin to legalize fentanyl testing strips. The County's Intergovernmental Relations Committee unanimously endorsed the [resolution](#) last week, and the Board of Supervisors will vote on it later this month.

"Milwaukee County has experienced the greatest suffering from opiate overdoses of all jurisdictions in Wisconsin," said Supervisor Ortiz-Velez. "Last year opiate overdose deaths continued to be higher than homicides, suicides, and motor vehicle accidents combined."

Overdose deaths in Milwaukee County have reached record highs according to a recent [Wisconsin Public Radio article](#) citing data from the National Center for Health Statistics. A significant number of opioid-related overdoses involve fentanyl, which is increasingly added to heroin, cocaine, and other drugs without the knowledge of drug users.

Under current state law, possessing fentanyl testing strips is illegal, for both community members and first responders. Without access to testing strips, drug users risk overdose from the otherwise undetectable presence of fentanyl.

"Fentanyl testing strips can be used to detect the presence of fentanyl in a substance and prevent accidental overdoses," Supervisor Ortiz-Velez said. "Law enforcement officers and emergency medical technicians are among the first to encounter cases of suspected overdoses and their ability to ascertain if fentanyl was involved changes the protocol and allows first responders to keep themselves safe."

Supervisor Ortiz-Velez's proposal has overwhelming community support, including from founder of [TEAM HAVOC](#) and [Milwaukee Heroin Diaries](#) Rafael Mercado, [God Touch Ministries](#) pastor Marty Calderon, and State Senator Lena Taylor.

Supervisors Willie Johnson Jr., Eddie Cullen, Ryan Clancy, Steven Shea, Sequanna Taylor, and Joseph J. Czarnecki were added as co-sponsors to the resolution and spoke passionately about the need to address overdose deaths in Milwaukee County.

The Board of Supervisors is expected to consider the item [Thursday, July 29](#).

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