



THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
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**TRANSCRIPT FROM WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2022: MAYOR ERIC ADAMS  
SIGNS INTRO. 56-A**

**Ariel Palitz, Executive Director, Office of Nightlife, Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment:** So I guess I'll begin. So thank you everyone for joining us here today as we take an important step to combat the overdose crisis in New York City by helping to make sure that there are Narcan kits behind every bar. I first would like to do a special thank you to the Chelsea Music Hall for hosting us today, our Council members, the Hospitality Alliance, and Phoenix House. I am Ariel Palitz, the executive director of the Office of Nightlife, a dedicated, non-enforcement liaison between the city and the nightlife industry and community to help support businesses and workers, to improve quality of life, promote safety, and uplift the culture.

The safety and wellbeing of this community is a top priority for the Office of Nightlife and we know that venues are places where people can look out for each other and protect each other. And because of this, we created the Narcan Behind Every Bar campaign with our partners at the Health Department and as part of the overall harm reduction approach of New York City. And while the overdose crisis is not exclusive to nightlife, we see venue staff and patrons as our partners in helping to combat this crisis. And now I have the distinct honor to introduce our mayor, a man who truly appreciates and demonstrates the value of what nightlife contributes to our culture and our economy in a city that operates 24 hours a day. I hear from people in the industry every night about their tremendous gratitude to have a mayor who unapologetically supports the commerce and culture of life at night. Please help join me in welcoming our nightlife mayor, Mr. Adams.

**Mayor Eric Adams:** I thought you were the nightlife mayor. To Councilman Ossé and my good friend Councilwoman Mercedes Narcissee as well, and to all of our team, our nightlife leaders, Phoenix House, our nightlife mayor, and this beautiful club. This is a city that never sleeps and overdoses, they never sleep. You talk to any emergency responder and they will tell you that the calls come throughout the entire night. And I think sometimes we underestimate the relationships of a nightlife establishment or watering hole or a place where you come to celebrate, the relationships between the patrons and those who work in the establishment. There are bonds that are built where you could identify when someone is in crisis right away, when someone's going through a state of depression, or when a person is experiencing some form of overdose. And by empowering our nightlife establishments to be part of this apparatus to combat the over-

proliferation of drugs. And particularly with fentanyl, the number of overdoses that we are experiencing are substantial. And every partner should be part of the operation.

What happens under the dim lights of a nightlife establishment should not prevent us on shedding the light on how do we deal with the opioid overdose or any form of drug overdose. And the administration's looking at all the ways of doing it from the drug usage locations to doing preventive measures on stopping the overdose crisis that we are facing. And this is one of them. This is something I did when I was borough president. We saw the power of Narcan. We saw how many times people shared with us how they saved the lives of a loved one or someone they knew that was going through an overdose. The overdose issue is real, it's here in the city, and we're not going to ignore it. We're going to head it face on. Too many families know the trauma of watching a loved one overdose and if they just had the proper tools to assist them during that time, they could save lives.

What we're doing today is saving lives. In the first three quarters of 2021, there were over a thousand, 1,956 overdose deaths in New York City. That's an alarming number and we're concerned about that. That's an overdose every three hours. And while our overdose prevention centers have been successful, intervening 500 overdoses since opening... 500, those are 500 lives we were able to save. We can and we must do better, we must do more, and we must think differently about how we address the issue. And that's why we are here today. And I want to thank the owners of this amazing establishment for not only entertaining New Yorkers, but entertaining the possibility of how do we save lives and extend our reach to help those who are in need. So today we are doing just that. With this bill signing today, we will be saving lives.

Intro. 56 provides for the Narcan to be used in a community-known setting like this, the nightlife establishments, and others. It is a medication that can be used to reverse the effects of an opioid overdose. And it's also education. And while Brooklyn borough president, we educated family members, we gave them free kits to have on hand and it allowed them to feel empowered and not powerless. Giving our bars, clubs, and venues the tools they need to deal with an unlikely event of an overdose really helps all the establishments that are involved. The presence of fentanyl in cocaine and other drugs mean New Yorkers who are using may not be aware that the opioids are present. That is really the danger of fentanyl. Oftentimes a user is not aware the power of fentanyl and that it's actually in their drugs. We want to make sure that those who are around or use drugs will have the assistance that they need and the workers in the environment will also be empowered. That's why we're putting Narcan behind every bar.

So right next to the alcohol that's served, there's going to be Narcan to help serve those who are dealing with any form of drug overdose. So I want to thank Speaker Adams. And again, I want to thank both Councilmen Ossé and Councilwoman Narcisse and the entire team at the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and the Office of Nightlife for their work in Narcan Behind Every Bar. This is a smart way to really respond to a real crisis that's in front of us. We have seen a devastating rise in drug overdose in the last two years. We want to meet it head on and we want to be thoughtful in how we accomplish this task. So thank all that's involved. And we cannot thank Phoenix House enough for the years of commitment and dedication on dealing with these very real issues that impact those who are dealing with substance abuse issues and countless other issues. So again, we thank the partnership. We look forward to continuing to coordinate

together, not only with our nightlife, our day life, and life in the great City of New York. Thank you very much.

(Council Members Chi Ossé and Mercedes Narcissee speak.)

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