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OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
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CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

**ELECTED OFFICIALS, PUBLIC HEALTH EXPERTS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS
PRAISE MAYOR DE BLASIO'S PLAN TO OPEN OVERDOSE PREVENTION
CENTERS**

Speaker Corey Johnson said: "The Council has been a leader in the push to bring these centers to New York City, and we thank Mayor de Blasio for taking this brave, important and necessary step. Too many people have died from opioids and heroin. These sites will save lives and connect addicts with treatment options and trained professionals that could lead them to recovery. This is something that I championed during my time as Chair of the Council Health Committee, and is an issue that has deep personal significance to me. I am proud of our city today for taking bold steps to address a problem that's gripped this country, and I hope other cities follow our lead and allow safe sites like these."

Brooklyn District Attorney Eric Gonzalez said, "We are in the midst of an overdose crisis and cannot sit by and let people die when there are proven interventions that can save lives and help people get into treatment. I intend to work with the NYPD, local officials and members of the community to make sure that any facility opened in Brooklyn would be safely integrated into the community and would connect substance users to treatment and other health and social programs."

Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance, Jr. said: "New Yorkers who are suffering and dying from opioids need bold public health interventions — not the heavy hand of the criminal justice system. My Office is proud to support the Mayor's proposal to establish Overdose Prevention Centers, and I thank Mayor de Blasio, Commissioner Bassett, and Speaker Johnson for their leadership."

Council Member Mark Levine, Chair of the Health Committee said, "The release of this Council-funded report makes one thing perfectly clear: Much like needle exchange sites--which 20 years ago were considered a radical approach to fighting the HIV epidemic--safe injection facilities are a proven method to prevent fatalities and curb addiction. This is a watershed moment in the fight against the addiction epidemic and a victory for the idea that policy should be based on science. Given that three people are dying from overdoses in our city every day, it's imperative that we implement this as soon as possible."

“Countries around the world have witnessed decreased rates of overdose deaths because of supervised injection facilities. Replicating this model in our city is necessary to combat the detrimental opioid epidemic that has ravaged our communities, some of which have been battling an opioid crisis for generations. Undoubtedly, Overdose Prevention Centers will save lives and I am proud New York City will be joining other progressive cities in championing this strategy,” said **Council Member Diana Ayala, Chair of the Committee On Mental Health, Disabilities, and Addiction and Co-Chair of the Progressive Caucus.**

"This step demonstrates a serious commitment to preserving lives and leading individuals towards the path to recovery," said **Council Member Stephen Levin, Chair of the General Welfare Committee.** "Big challenges require bold solutions, and these centers will be an important tool to prevent overdose deaths in our city. It is our responsibility to meet the challenge head on -- that's why I have been a fierce proponent of these centers. I applaud Mayor de Blasio for ensuring New York City is a leader on this issue, and I look forward to working with the administration, advocates, and the community."

Council Member Keith Powers said: "This is an opportunity for New York City to evaluate the use of facilities that have a great potential to save lives. Thank you Mayor de Blasio for taking a step forward on the issue and to Speaker Johnson for recognizing the potential and being an early advocate."

Dr. Thomas Farley, Philadelphia's Health Commissioner said: "With drug overdoses at staggering levels, we need to rethink our assumptions and try solutions we wouldn't have considered before. Mayor de Blasio's decision to open overdose prevention sites is the kind of smart and bold action that this crisis deserves."

“Big cities and small communities throughout the nation are facing an epidemic of fatal overdoses caused by the use of heroin and other opioids,” said **Congressman Jerrold Nadler.** “We in government must act now to stop more of these tragic deaths, as well as ensure that people get the needed treatment to beat their addiction. These planned overdose prevention centers to be placed around the City are an important component of a critical public health and harm reduction strategy that I believe will save the lives of many New Yorkers. And this, coupled with continued smart crime prevention approaches will make New York an even healthier, safer place to live.”

"I have always been a proponent of harm reduction policies and programs because they are a more effective way of addressing addiction and the implementation of safe injection sites fall in line with that principle," said **State Senator Gustavo Rivera, Ranking Member of the NYS Senate Health Committee.** "The Mayor's plan takes us one step closer to providing New Yorkers battling addiction with direct access to the life-saving services they need. I thank Mayor de Blasio for his leadership and I am committed to working with him on the implementation of these sites and combating the opioid epidemic overall."

"While the spread of the opioid epidemic to Upper Manhattan is causing serious concern to all, I am happy to see City Hall is taking action. The only way to mitigate the spread is by providing resources to communities in need. Thank you to City Hall for bringing an Opioid Prevention

Center to Washington Heights. I am sure it will prove to be an invaluable resource,” said **State Senator Marisol Alcantara**.

“I applaud the de Blasio Administration for taking the wise and bold step of piloting safer consumption spaces in New York City. The opioid crisis has ravaged our communities unabated despite our best efforts, and safer consumption spaces will help us turn the tide and save lives. I look forward to continuing my work with advocates and the Administration to bring safer consumption spaces to every corner of the state,” said **Assembly Member Linda B. Rosenthal, Chair of the Committee on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse, and sponsor of legislation to establish safer consumption spaces statewide**.

Assembly Member Jo Anne Simon said: “I applaud mayor de Blasio for stepping forward and piloting the establishment of overdose prevention sites. I believe that this approach will prove to be a major advance in reducing the opioid crisis. The site anticipated for my district is at a well-established location serving the community in which I have total confidence.”

“I am proud of the work of the New York City Council under my leadership to elevate the conversation on Overdose Prevention Centers. The study we funded helped set our city on a path to make this groundbreaking and lifesaving model a reality. I thank the Mayor for taking these bold and important steps to bring these Centers to our city's neighborhoods as well as the organizations on the ground for their consistent advocacy,” said **Melissa Mark-Viverito, former Speaker of the New York City Council**.

“Housing Works is thrilled that Mayor de Blasio has stepped up to do the right thing given the skyrocketing rates of overdose in New York City,” said **Housing Works President & CEO Charles King**. “One thing we have learned from years of fighting the AIDS epidemic is that harm reduction works.”

“Mayor de Blasio is demonstrating how cities should respond to our growing overdose crisis. Medically supervised sites for people to use drugs save lives and must be embraced. We cannot let stigma and punishment guide our drug policy, instead we must focus on compassion, health, and safety. Today’s announcement does just that - we are proud that New York City is moving forward on this groundbreaking and lifesaving effort,” said **Jeremy Saunders, Co-Executive Director of VOCAL-NY**.

“We strongly endorse the Mayor’s commitment to pilot Supervised Consumption Sites and believe it is critical that one of the pilot sites be located in the Bronx. Our Borough has the highest rate of drug overdose deaths in the State. We must take action to save lives,” said **Joyce A. Rivera, Founder & Executive Director, St. Ann’s Corner of Harm Reduction**.

“It’s very exciting to see the Mayor support this evidence based lifesaving strategy to end suffering for people struggling with drug dependency. Injection sites save lives and restore hope and dignity to individuals, families and communities,” said **Liz Evans, Executive Director of New York Harm Reduction Educators / Washington Heights Corner Project**.

Patrick Gaspard, President of the Open Society Foundation, said: “This is a bold step in the midst of a national health crisis that will save lives and serve as a model for other American cities struggling with this epidemic. The data is clear. Supervised consumption sites around the world have reduced overdose rates, and contained the spread of HIV and hepatitis C. Critically, they connect people who use drugs to healthcare, treatment, and social services that save families and communities. This is a major leap forward in the U.S. as we all rethink failed, punitive policies of the past at a critical juncture in public health.”

"The National Black Leadership Commission on AIDS, Inc. supports supervised consumption sites and commends Mayor de Blasio for undertaking the feasibility study on establishing such facilities in New York City. Information from the study can, with the Mayor's support, open the door for establishing safe, supervised spaces that will undoubtedly help to save lives. In doing so, recognition must be given to the disproportionate toll of overdoses among Black and Latino populations that have existed far too long and ensure that the sites are equitably located in these communities," said **C. Virginia Fields President and CEO of NBLCA**.

“Acacia Network was founded by pioneers in the battle against drugs and addiction in the late 60s. All these years later and despite all of our efforts and expertise, we recognize the magnitude of this opioid crisis. We thank Mayor Bill de Blasio for this bold vision for opening the first Overdose Prevention Centers in New York City. We wholeheartedly support the four identified sites, particularly in the Bronx, where the overdose rate is the highest in the city. We at Acacia stand along all that are making efforts at city, state, and federal levels to combat and end this crisis," said **Raul Russi, CEO of Acacia Network**.

“Mayor de Blasio and the city have demonstrated wisdom and courage in establishing overdose prevention facilities at critical locations around the city. The morally assertive and medically progressive initiative will save thousands of lives and families it will help stabilize communities ravaged by this latest scourge of addiction. Societal retribution and dogma have shown themselves fatally flawed. This administration's intelligent and wise application and deployment of public health resources as opposed to criminal justice resources will prove and morally and socially superior public safety policy in the near and long terms. We will bury less of our relatives, friends, neighbors and co-workers he de Blasio administration with this policy will broaden and deepen the public health and safety nets and strengthen us all as a city,” said **Kirsten John Foy, Northeast Regional Director for National Action Network**.

“Mayor de Blasio's embrace of overdose prevention centers is a critical step forward in preventing overdose deaths in New York City. We know that overdose prevention centers are an evidence-based solution that can help dramatically in saving lives, reducing criminalization, and improving public health,” said **Kassandra Frederique, New York State Director at the Drug Policy Alliance**. “New York can and must be a leader now in saving lives by opening overdose prevention centers swiftly.”

“I heartily congratulate my colleagues at the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene on the release of their historic report that supports the establishment of supervised drug consumption spaces. Though the science is clear that these programs prevent overdoses and have saved countless lives in other countries, the legal and political landscapes in the United States

make the approval here of such programs challenging. New York City has demonstrated the courage to take up this challenge the same way it did in collaboration with New York State in the establishment of syringe exchange programs a quarter century ago at the height of the AIDS epidemic. I look forward to the opening of the proposed pilot sites as a critical additional step in addressing the opioid overdose epidemic that now claims over one thousand city residents every year," said **Dan O'Connell, Former Director, New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute.**

"We commend Mayor de Blasio for embracing supervised consumption facilities as a critical public health intervention to prevent overdose deaths in New York City. And we recognize and honor the incredible work of people who use drugs and harm reductionists who worked so hard to make this change possible," said **Gabriel Sayegh, Co-Executive Director of the Katal Center for Health, Equity, and Justice.** "Once again, New York City is leading the way to address a health crisis with an evidence-based response that will improve public health and safety for all."

"Callen-Lorde is thrilled and relieved that Mayor de Blasio will support the opening of four safe injection facilities in New York City. Medically-supervised, non-judgmental harm reduction spaces for people to consume drugs are a sound public health approach, and offer great potential, to preventing drug overdose and improving health," said **Wendy Stark, Executive Director of the Callen-Lorde Community Health Center.**

"Under Mayor de Blasio's leadership, our most vulnerable New Yorkers have new hope for refuge from the overdose crisis. Harm Reduction Coalition is proud to stand with the Mayor and our communities in embracing Overdose Prevention Centers -- a vital source of safety and support for people struggling to protect themselves from overdose. We will eagerly work with our partners and allies to fulfill the promise of Overdose Prevention Centers: bringing people who use drugs in from the cold and out of harm's way," said **Daniel Raymond, Deputy Director of Planning and Policy, Harm Reduction Coalition.**

"We welcome Mayor Bill de Blasio's leadership in embracing a proven prevention strategy on Overdose Prevention Center as a cornerstone for safer consumption. Equally important are investments in peer led intervention programs, health professionals at community centers and hospitals, increasing naloxone distribution and training on how to use this lifesaving drug, and connecting more New Yorkers struggling with substance use to treatment and lifesaving support services. NYC must be at the forefront to save lives, reduce stigma and prevent opioid overdose deaths," stated **Guillermo Chacon, President of the Latino Commission on AIDS and founder of the Hispanic Health Network.**

"The effects of the opioid epidemic are being felt all around our country " said **San Francisco Board of Supervisors President London Breed.** "Just because we don't want to see drug use on our streets doesn't mean it is going away. We need real, innovative, and effective ways of helping those struggling with addiction in our communities. As a leader of the effort to open safe injection sites in San Francisco, I applaud Mayor De Blasio's efforts to create overdose prevention centers to get individuals struggling with addiction into treatment and prevent overdoses."

“The Urban Justice Center commends Mayor de Blasio for supporting the opening of overdose prevention centers. Safe injection sites have been proven to save lives. This pilot program will provide relief to some of the most vulnerable New Yorkers and serve as an example to other cities throughout the country,” said **Doug Lasdon, Executive Director of the Urban Justice Center.**

“As opioid addiction and resulting deaths become commonplace in our country, New York is taking a step to proactively face this tragedy and help people have a chance at recovery. I’m proud to live in a city that is courageously addressing this epidemic, and I applaud this bold effort,” said **Rev. Amy Butler, Senior Pastor of Riverside Church.**

“We applaud Mayor de Blasio’s leadership to support Overdose Prevention Centers - life-saving and life-affirming health and wellness opportunities for our fellow New Yorker's, neighbors and loved ones, who have long been struggling to save one another from opioid overdose. Overdose Prevention Centers are a strategic expression of the worth and dignity of all New Yorkers, and of our collective commitment to expand access to connection, healing, and hope for the most vulnerable among us. Shaping Sanctuary and Judson Memorial Church are in partnership to craft responses to the opioid crisis rooted in love, liberation and justice. We look forward to working alongside this Administration, with community partners, and under the leadership of people with lived experience to save lives and reduce harm,” said **Reverend Dr. Donna Schaper, Senior Minister, Judson Memorial Church and Erica Poellot, Senior Community Minister, Judson Memorial Church and Director of “Shaping Sanctuary: Faith Leadership for Harm Reduction,” a strategic partnership between Judson Memorial Church and Harm Reduction Coalition.**

“We’re proud that New York City is joining others across the country and around the world in the effort to curb overdose deaths by embracing Overdose Prevention Centers. The LGBTQI community faces challenges with drugs at as much as three times the general population, in part due to a lack of proper healthcare resources and hostile social and work environments. Health and saving lives is central to the collective LGBTQI movement’s history, and we applaud Mayor Bill de Blasio for taking action to support those who are experiencing addiction. We are especially proud of our partners at GMHC and Vocal NY for their leadership in advocacy on this issue,” said **Gabriel Blau, Co-Founder of Equality NY.**

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