

DENVER CITY COUNCIL



Proclamation No. 24-1104 A Proclamation for Overdose Grief Day

WHEREAS, Overdose Awareness Day is recognized around the world as an occasion to acknowledge those who have experienced an overdose, as well as loved ones who have been affected; and

WHEREAS, the Denver City Council and the Denver community recognize Overdose Grief Day this year, moving beyond awareness to recognize the deep anguish and loss that overdose brings to our community; and

WHEREAS, each year a record number of deaths are being reported, driven predominantly by use of fentanyl, methamphetamine, in combination with other drugs; and an unregulated drug supply; and

WHEREAS, over 100,000 people continue to die every year in the United States, with 2023 bringing the most drug related deaths in Denver at 598; and

WHEREAS, overdose continues to be the leading cause of death of Denver's unhoused friends; and

WHEREAS, over the last 53 plus years of the racist and classist war on drugs, drug overdose deaths have increased significantly in many parts of the world, including Denver, and continue to worsen; and

WHEREAS, Overdose Grief Day & the Denver City Council denounces the criminalization and incarceration of people who use drugs; and

WHEREAS, Overdose Grief Day hopes to publicly challenge the stigma associated with drug use and overdose; and

WHEREAS, Overdose Grief Day sends a strong message to current and former people who use drugs that their lives are valued; and

WHEREAS, this day spreads the message that the tragedy of overdose death is preventable and empowers people to work together to prevent overdose as a community by prioritizing harm reduction initiatives such as naloxone, fentanyl testing strips, syringe access programs, overdose prevention sites, and a safe supply; and

WHEREAS, the Denver City Council honors the work of harm reduction programs through the Harm Reduction Action Center, Colorado Health Network, and Vivent Health, as well as the efforts of city staff in the Department of Public Health and Environment Community and Behavioral Health division and the Office of the Medical Examiner, that remains dedicated to preventing overdose deaths, improving treatment access and retention, and reducing harm; and

WHEREAS, Overdose Grief Day provides an opportunity for people to publicly mourn for loved ones, some for the very first time, without the feelings of guilt or shame.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED BY DENVER CITY COUNCIL:

Section 1. That the Denver City Council proclaims August 31st as Denver Overdose Grief Day.

Section 2. That the Clerk and Recorder of the City and County of Denver shall affix the seal of the City and County of Denver to this proclamation and that a copy be transmitted to Lisa Raville of the Harm Reduction Action Center, a copy be transmitted to Alina Naismith of Vivent Health, and a copy be transmitted to the Denver Department of Public Health and Environment.

PASSED BY THE COUNCIL August 26, 2024

Amursh P. Sandora

PRESIDENT

