

BOARD OF HEALTH RESOLUTION

**ADDRESSING FENTANYL OVERDOSE DEATHS AND
AUTHORIZING PURCHASE AND DISTRIBUTION OF FENTANYL TEST STRIPS**

WHEREAS, on September 10, 2014 the Board of Health passed a resolution encouraging a variety of community efforts to combat heroin and prescription opioid addiction and overdoses;

WHEREAS, on April 13, 2016 the Board of Health authorized the Jefferson County Department of Health to purchase the opioid antagonist naloxone for distribution in Jefferson County at no cost to individuals at risk of experiencing an opioid-related overdose or to individuals in a position to assist others experiencing an opioid-related overdose;

WHEREAS, the number of overdose deaths from illicitly produced fentanyl has been increasing in Jefferson County over the past several years;

WHEREAS, out of the 401 total overdose deaths recorded in Jefferson County in 2021, 316 involved fentanyl (1);

WHEREAS, fentanyl is increasingly present in other drugs such as cocaine, methamphetamine, and counterfeit prescription pills, often without the knowledge of the drug user;

WHEREAS, commercially available brands of fentanyl test strips, originally designed to test urine, have been shown to detect the presence of fentanyl in small amounts of other illicit drugs dissolved in water (2) (3);

WHEREAS, studies have shown that a majority of drug users provided with fentanyl test strips utilized them to test their drugs before use; of those who detected the presence of fentanyl, a majority reported not using the drug at all, using less of the drug, using the drug more slowly, and/or using the drug with someone else present (2) (4) (5);

WHEREAS, in March 2022 Alabama's drug paraphernalia law (Section 13A-12-260 of the Code of Alabama of 1975) was amended to exempt (legalize) the distribution or possession of certain items used to test for the presence of fentanyl or any synthetic controlled substance fentanyl analogue;

BE IT RESOLVED that deaths from fentanyl overdose is a major public health problem in Jefferson County, and

BE IT RESOLVED that Jefferson County Department of Health is authorized to purchase fentanyl test strips for distribution at no cost to individuals in Jefferson County who are at risk of experiencing a fentanyl overdose.



Kenny Murray, MD, Chair
Jefferson County Board of Health

References:

- (1) Jefferson County Coroner/Medical Examiner's Office 2021 Annual Report, pp 59-61; Published March, 2022.
- (2) Fentanyl Overdose Reduction Checking Analysis Study (FORECAST), Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health; 2018 Feb. Accessed on May 6, 2022 at https://americanhealth.jhu.edu/sites/default/files/website-media/resources/Fentanyl_Executive_Summary_032018.pdf
- (3) Bergh MS, Leere Oiestad AM, Baumann MH, Bogen, IL. Selectivity and Sensitivity of urine fentanyl test strips to detect fentanyl analogues in illicit drugs. *International Journal of Drug Policy* 90 (2021).
- (4) Goldman JE, Waye KM, Periera KA, Krieger MS, Yedinak JL, Marshall BDL. Perspectives on rapid fentanyl test strips as a harm reduction practice among young adults who use drugs: a qualitative study. *Harm Reduction Journal*. 2019 Jan 8; 16(1):3.
- (5) Peiper NC, Clarke SD, Vincent LB, Ciccarone D, Kral AH, Zibbell JE. Fentanyl test strips as an opioid overdose prevention strategy: Findings from a syringe services program in the Southeastern United States. *International Journal of Drug Policy*. 2019 Jan; 63:122-128.