

CITY OF BALTIMORE

STEPHANIE RAWLINGS-BLAKE, Mayor



HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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Dear colleagues,

I am writing to you to ask for your help on a critical public health emergency. In 2015, Baltimore City had an alarming increase in fentanyl-related overdose deaths. **In October alone, there were 14 deaths related to fentanyl—a 133 % increase over last year.** The Police Department and DEA also report an increase in fentanyl-laced heroin drug trafficking in Baltimore City.

Many of the patients who died from fentanyl overdose were receiving care from SUD providers in Baltimore. On behalf of the Baltimore City Health Department and the state-mandated Overdose Fatality Review Committee, I urge you to take the following actions:

1. ***Hang the fentanyl flyer in your clinic/facility and distribute it to your patients.*** The flyer warns people of the dangers of fentanyl-laced heroin and how to reduce risks related to heroin use. Flyer is enclosed with this letter.
2. ***Prescribe naloxone to all your patients.*** This is a best practice for overdose prevention. Prescribing can be done at initial intake or after orientation. Many programs have made this part of a client's treatment plan and periodically check in to see if the client still has their naloxone kit. You may have your doctor write the prescription or you may use the standing order I issued in October 2015 (enclosed). If you need help getting naloxone at your clinic Behavioral Health System Baltimore, 410-637-1900.
3. ***Talk to your patients to about overdose.*** Overdose education can be a powerful tool to engage patients into a conversation about drug use. The conversation should focus on safe drug use and remember to tell your patients to always carry naloxone.

If you have any questions, please contact Adrienne Breidenstine, Director of Opioid Overdose Prevention and Treatment, at adrienne.breidenstine@bhsbaltimore.org or 443-615-7824.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent issue. With your help, we can save the lives of our City's residents.

Sincerely,

Leana S. Wen, M.D. M.Sc. FAAEM
Commissioner of Health