



Senate of the Associated Students of the University of Nevada

91st Session, 2023-2024

A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE DISTRIBUTION OF FENTANYL TESTING STRIPS

Resolution Number: 64

Authored By: Senator Limbacher and Beaulac

Sponsored By: 2023-2024 Student Government Assembly

Whereas, from 1999 to 2021, 645,000 people died from drug overdose in the United States¹;

Whereas, fentanyl is a tasteless, synthetic opioid 50 times more potent than heroine and 10 times stronger than morphine;

Whereas, fentanyl can cause sedation, confusion, drowsiness, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, urinary retention, pupillary, cyanosis, comas, and respiratory failures leading to death²;

Whereas, 2 milligrams of fentanyl is considered a lethal dose. To put this into perspective, this tiny amount of fentanyl is small enough to fit onto the tip of a pencil³;

Whereas, in 2022, fentanyl was the leading cause of drug-related deaths, contributing to 68.4% of cases and was responsible for 200 deaths every day in the United States⁴;

Whereas, fentanyl deaths are up 540% in the last three years in the United States⁵;

¹ "Understanding the Opioid Overdose Epidemic." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 8 Aug. 2023, www.cdc.gov/opioids/basics/epidemic.html.

² "Drug Fact Sheet: Fentanyl ." United States Drug Enforcement Administration, U.S. Department of Justice , 2022, www.dea.gov/sites/default/files/2023-06/Fentanyl%202022%20Drug%20Fact%20Sheet-update.pdf.

³ "Drug Fact Sheet: Fentanyl ." United States Drug Enforcement Administration, U.S. Department of Justice , 2022, www.dea.gov/sites/default/files/2023-06/Fentanyl%202022%20Drug%20Fact%20Sheet-update.pdf.

⁴ "Are Fentanyl Overdose Deaths Rising in the US?" USAFacts, USAFacts, 27 Sept. 2023, usafacts.org/articles/are-fentanyl-overdose-deaths-rising-in-the-us/

⁵ "Detecting Fentanyl. Saving Lives." Bloomberg American Health Initiative, John Hopkins , americanhealth.jhu.edu/fentanyl

Whereas, in 2021, 20.4 million illegal prescription pills were seized by the US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and over half of them contained fentanyl⁶;

Whereas, 7 out of 10 pills seized by the DEA contain a lethal dose of fentanyl, and 62 million fentanyl pills have been seized so far in 2023⁷;

Whereas, according to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), harm reduction “is an evidence-based approach that is critical to engaging with people who use drugs and equipping them with life-saving tools and information to create positive change in their lives and potentially save their lives.”⁸;

Whereas, in a study conducted by Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health to understand fentanyl overdose harm-reduction methods, 84% of respondents were concerned about the presence of fentanyl in the drugs they consumed⁹;

Whereas, in a study published by the Harm Reduction Journal, young adults were given, and trained on, fentanyl testing strips, and 95% reported that they planned to continue using the testing strips¹⁰;

Whereas, in the same study, 50% of participants reported at least one positive test result, over a ten (10) month period;

Whereas, the University of South California (USC) only began distributing fentanyl testing strips after the disastrous loss of twelve (12) students, highlighting the urgent need for institutions to implement harm-reduction methods¹¹;

Whereas, rather than waiting for tragedy to occur, institutions need to get ahead of substance- related issues, such as the introduction of drug testing strips on campuses;

⁶ “DEA Laboratory Testing Reveals That 6 out of 10 Fentanyl-Laced Fake Prescription Pills Now Contain a Potentially Lethal Dose of Fentanyl.” United States Drug Enforcement Administration, www.dea.gov/alert/dea-laboratory-testing-reveals-6-out-10-fentanyl-laced-fake-prescription-pills-now-contain. Accessed 15 Oct. 2023.

⁷ “One Pill Can Kill.” United States Drug Enforcement Administration, U.S. Department of Justice, www.dea.gov/onepill.

⁸ “Harm Reduction.” SAMHSA, www.samhsa.gov/find-help/harm-reduction. Accessed 15 Oct. 2023

⁹ “Fentanyl Overdose Reduction Checking Analysis Study.” Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, americanhealth.jhu.edu/sites/default/files/website-media/resources/Fentanyl_Executive_Summary_032018.pdf.

¹⁰ Carroll, J.J., et al. “Use of Rapid Fentanyl Test Strips among Young Adults Who Use Drugs.” *International Journal of Drug Policy*, Elsevier, 18 Oct. 2018, www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S09555395918302469.

¹¹ “Students Hand out Fentanyl Testing Strips to Colleges to Prevent Overdoses.” NBCNews.Com, NBCUniversal News Group, 27 Sept. 2023, www.nbcnews.com/nightly-news/video/students-hand-out-fentanyl-testing-strips-to-colleges-to-prevent-overdoses-139733573538

Whereas, many other universities give their students life-saving access to fentanyl testing strips, such as the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Riverside University of California, University of California, Santa Barbara, University of California, Santa Cruz, University of Washington, University of New Mexico, University of Colorado, Boulder, West Virginia University, University of Maryland, and New York University;

Whereas, fentanyl testing strips are extremely easy to use, and can be used with multiple different forms of drugs, including pills, pastes, sprays, liquids, and powders²;

Whereas, fentanyl testing strips have been proven to have a 96% to 100% accuracy rate¹²;

Whereas, fentanyl testing strips are priced at just one dollar¹³;

Whereas, individuals may hold the perception that the availability of these testing strips could inadvertently encourage or legitimize drug use, however, they are failing to recognize the complexity of addiction and the role that fentanyl testing strips have in saving lives;

Whereas, instead of promoting reckless behavior, testing strips empower users to make informed decisions about their drug use, reducing the risk of accidental overdoses;

Whereas, as an Association, we need to prioritize saving lives over making judgements about the morality of testing strips;

Whereas, the University of California, San Francisco, found that distributing fentanyl testing strips did not increase fentanyl use on campus¹⁴;

Whereas, it must be considered that without these tools, people might unknowingly consume drugs containing fentanyl, leading to more overdoses;

Whereas, fentanyl testing strips are just one part of a broader harm reduction strategy, and should be used simultaneously with other preventative measures;

¹² “NMDOH Highlights Guidance for Immunocompromised Patients and Booster Doses of COVID-19 Vaccine for Special Populations.” NMDOH Coronavirus Updates, cv.nmhealth.org/2022/02/23/nmdoh-highlights-guidance-for-immunocompromised-patients-and-booster-doses-of-covid-19-vaccine-for-special-populations/. Accessed 16 Oct. 2023.

¹³ “Fentanyl Test Strips.” Legislative Analysis and Public Policy Association, Office of National Drug Control Policy, www.attorneygeneral.gov/taking-action/ag-shapiro-releases-special-report-on-fentanyl-becoming-dominant-opioid-in-pennsylvania/. Accessed 16 Oct. 2023.

¹⁴ González, Laura López. “Can a Simple Fentanyl Test Curb San Francisco’s Overdose Crisis?” University of California, 5 Oct. 2023, www.universityofcalifornia.edu/news/can-simple-fentanyl-test-curb-san-franciscos-overdose-crisis#:~:text=There's%20no%20evidence%20that%20test,have%20access%20to%20clean%20supplies.

Be it resolved that, The Associated Students of the University of Nevada, Reno supports and strongly encourages fentanyl testing strips become readily available on campus.

Be it further resolved that, this legislation be sent to the following individuals:

- Cheryl Hug-English, Medical Director of the Student Health Center
- David Alejo, President of the Interfraternity Council
- Talia Guzmán, President of the Multicultural Greek Council
- Eric Hansen, President of the Independent Interfraternity Council
- Eric James, Assistant Vice President, Chief of Police

Adopted in Senate on January 24, 2024

Attest:

Ally Chavez, Senate Secretary

Fayza Salah, Speaker of the Senate