



**Offered by City Councilor Annissa Essaibi-George, Bok, Janey, O'Malley, Flynn, Arroyo, Wu, Breadon, Edwards, Flaherty, Mejia and Campbell**

**CITY OF BOSTON  
IN CITY COUNCIL**

**ORDER FOR A HEARING TO REVIEW THE  
WOMEN-SPECIFIC OUTREACH AND HEALTHCARE  
PROGRAMMING TO COMBAT THE OPIOID CRISIS**

**WHEREAS:** Women make up 52% of Boston's population, 35% of whom are between the ages of 20-34, 54% of whom are women of color, and 23% of whom are living in poverty; and

**WHEREAS:** Substance use disorder has particularly complicated implications and co-occurring health concerns for young women, pregnant women, women with postpartum depression, queer women, and transwomen; and

**WHEREAS:** Approximately 28% of young women in Massachusetts, age 18-24, died in 2013-2014 due to opioids, which is a higher percentage than their male counterparts in the same age range; and

**WHEREAS:** Despite the Commonwealth's historically low rates, pregnancy-associated mortality has been increasing in Massachusetts and most causes are preventable; and

**WHEREAS:** In Massachusetts, approximately one in five pregnancy-associated deaths (20.6%) were related to substance use and more than a third (38.3%) of the deaths among women delivering a live birth between 2011 and 2015 were fatal opioid-related overdoses, with the vast majority (90.2%) occurring during the postpartum period, between 42 and 365 days after delivery; and

**WHEREAS:** Postpartum depression impacts and appears in women differently, particularly depending on the woman's race, cultural background, economic status, and access to mental healthcare; and

**WHEREAS:** According to the CDC, between 2010-2016, new hepatitis C infections increased 249% and the rate of infants born to hepatitis C-infected mothers increased by 39% nationally in one year alone (2015-2016), primarily due to the nation's opioid crisis; and

**WHEREAS:** According to the 2015 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, queer people across all age brackets were significantly more likely to have misused prescription pain relievers in the last year compared to heterosexual adults, and had almost three times greater risk of opioid use disorder compared to heterosexual adults; and

**WHEREAS:** In the US, transgender women of all racial and ethnic backgrounds are 49 times more likely to be HIV-infected than the general population, with 20-25% of transgender women currently living with HIV; and

**WHEREAS:** The CDC estimates that 44% of Black transgender women, 26% of Latinx transgender women, and 7% of White transgender women have HIV; and

**WHEREAS:** According to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Boston has been in the top five of Massachusetts cities with the highest incidence of HIV diagnosis and the majority of women with HIV are disproportionately women of color; and

**WHEREAS:** Approximately 56% of transgender women in Massachusetts living with HIV infection were under 40 years old, compared to only 18% of all individuals living with HIV infection; and

**WHEREAS:** The CDC also reports that currently 1 of every 10 new HIV infections is among people who inject drugs, which suggests that as the opioid crisis continues, HIV prevalence may increase as well, **THEREFORE BE IT**

**ORDERED:** That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to learn from the City of Boston's Health and Human Services and advocates to examine improvements to our outreach efforts to improve access to healthcare for women in Boston.

**Filed:** January 21, 2021