



CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

MAYOR'S OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

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Praise for City's New HHS Investments

PHILADELPHIA - In his second budget address, Mayor Kenney asked Council to approve significant new investments to strengthen the City's child welfare system and to combat lead poisoning, opioid addiction, and homelessness. Specifically, the Mayor's second budget proposes:

- \$1.9 M in FY18, with approximately \$1.5 annually over the subsequent four years to address the prescription opioid and heroin epidemic through a public education campaign, distribution of naloxone (opioid overdose antidote), working with public health practitioners to reduce opioid prescribing, and a real-time database to track openings in addiction treatment facilities.
- \$525,000 annually in rapid-rehousing funds to support an additional 50 families experiencing homelessness each year.
- \$500,000 annually for supportive housing to assist individuals and families with chronic illness, disabilities, mental health issues, or substance use disorders who have experienced long-term or repeated homelessness. This program has a 90 percent success rate of preventing a return to homelessness.
- Raising the rate for foster families from a per diem of \$21.25 to \$35.88 by FY22 to keep up with rising costs and to enable more families to join the foster care system.
- Adding 10 lawyers to the Child Welfare unit to represent abused and neglected children and youth, reducing average caseloads by approximately 30%.
- Over \$900,000 annually to protect children against lead poisoning, through remediation, enforcement and education.

Businesses, non-profits and advocates alike praised the Mayor's investments as key to reducing the city's poverty rate and improving the city's climate for business growth, some noting the specific impact this would have on the city's Kensington-Fairhill area, the center of the city's opioid crisis.

Maria Gonzalez, HACE: "Under Mayor Kenney, last year the City launched its first coordinated effort to address the longstanding issues of heroin and opioid addiction plaguing the Kensington-Fairhill neighborhoods. This budget builds on that progress by providing much needed services for those Philadelphians suffering from homelessness and drug dependence."

Anuj Gupta, General Manager, Reading Terminal Market: "Homelessness and opioid addiction are two terrible tragedies that afflict one too many Philadelphians. The administration should be applauded for developing a response and solution at a time when resources continue to be constrained. The business community can and should partner with the Administration to enact solutions as the only way we will fundamentally resolve these issues is if we work together. This is a great first step towards that goal."

Reagan Kelley, Community Umbrella Agency NET: "Foster parents are the unsung heroes of the child welfare system. It takes a remarkable amount of commitment to open your hearts and homes to a child who has been through significant trauma. Acknowledging their value will have a tremendous impact on the system's ability to recruit and retain foster parents. This, coupled with additional legal resources, will make a positive difference in the lives of thousands of children and their families."

Donna Cooper, Public Citizens for Children and Youth (PCCY): "Lead poisoning effects a child for life. That's why we are so heartened that Mayor Kenney's is breaking from the past and increasing City's funds aimed at preventing poisoning. The proposed increase is a great sign that the City is getting serious about protecting children from lead. Philadelphia's children will also benefit the many ways this budget builds on the Mayor's already unprecedented commitment to our children's education system through pre-k and community schools and the rebuilding of the city's youth serving assets including our libraries, parks and recreation centers."

Casey O'Donnell, Impact Services: "Mayor Kenney recognizes that opioid addiction is a complex major health problem affecting his city. As a Philadelphian he knows that addiction and the drug trade tear apart the fabric of families and neighborhoods and that law enforcement alone cannot solve this problem. He also understands that everyone living under bridges injecting heroin are someone's sons, daughters, sisters and brothers. Jim has personally come to the epicenter of opioid addiction and drug trade in Kensington, spoken with neighbors, and seen for himself what the challenges are. He has firmly and compassionately committed his partnership to the creation of a human focused recovery oriented strategy to reclaim lives, families, and futures."

PHLCVB president and CEO, Julie Coker Graham: "Our job at the Philadelphia Convention and Visitors Bureau is to market Philadelphia as a premiere meetings, convention and sporting events destination as well as a leading U.S. visitor destination, globally. It is of paramount importance to us that our most vulnerable are cared for and supplied with the resources to improve their lives, as outlined in the Mayor's proposed budget. As the co-chair of the Mayor's Shared Spaces initiative, and as we look to develop solutions around homelessness, many of us in the hospitality community appreciate being called upon to work hand-in-hand with the Mayor and City Council to strengthen our city."

Mike Dahl, Broad Street Ministry: "We are so grateful at Broad Street Ministry to be working with a Mayor who prioritizes the needs of our most vulnerable neighbors, including those experiencing homelessness and falling prey to the scourge of the opioid epidemic, and who is willing to make tangible investments to help end the cycle of poverty facing far too many children in this city. This proposed budget reflects a deep understanding that in order for our city to be the best it can be, we must first create paths to opportunity and stability for our most marginalized."

Kathy Desmond, People's Emergency Center: "People's Emergency Center supports the Mayor's proposal to increase spending on health and human services program to combat the consequences of poverty, like increasing homeless prevention and housing opportunity, improving resources for families and children, and employment at wages that provide for critical basic needs. At PEC, our programs address these needs with housing, service supports, counseling, career preparation, benefits access, financial literacy, and links to other resources."

Sister Mary Scullion, Project HOME: "We applaud Mayor Kenney's budget that focuses on solutions to

poverty and homelessness.”

Jose A Benitez, Prevention Point Philadelphia: “Philadelphia like other parts of the country is in the midst of an opioid epidemic never before witnessed. There were over 900 overdose deaths in 2016, triple the homicide rate. Like never before support for more recovery services are needed to reverse this trend. Prevention Point Philadelphia supports the Mayor's proposal to increase funding.”

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