



CITY OF LAGUNA NIGUEL

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April 30, 2024

The Honorable Anna Caballero
Chair of Senate Committee on Appropriations
1021 O Street, Room 2200
Sacramento, CA 95814

SUBJECT: SB 1502 (Ashby) Controlled Substances: Xylazine.
Notice of Support (As Amended April 15, 2024)

Dear Senator Caballero,

The City of Laguna Niguel is pleased to support SB 1502 (Ashby), which would add xylazine, also known on the street as "tranq", to the list of Schedule III substances of California's Uniform Controlled Substances Act.

A non-opiate sedative and muscle relaxant that is only authorized for veterinary use is increasingly being found in illicit drug supplies in the U.S. and has been linked to a growing number of overdoses. The use of this substance can be dangerous and is especially life-threatening when used alongside opioids such as fentanyl. It has been increasingly found in combination with fentanyl, cocaine, heroin, and other substances. Xylazine is making the fentanyl crisis in this state even worse, as when combined with other substances, it becomes more potent and addictive.

Laguna Niguel continues to serve as a leader in Orange County, educating residents on the "One Pill Can Kill" campaign and hosting community forums to discuss this salient issue. In 2021, 1,348 people in Orange County died of a drug or alcohol-related cause, with opioid-related deaths accounting for 746 (55%) of those deaths. Fentanyl has become the most frequent type of opioid involved in overdose deaths. In 2021, fentanyl was the number one cause of death for people ages 18-45, outpacing suicides.

According to the California Department of Public Health, statewide fentanyl-related deaths increased from 239 in 2016 to 5,722 in 2021 – a nearly 2,300 percent increase over the last five years. In that same period, Orange County fentanyl-related deaths increased by over 1800%, from 37 to 716, with the largest age group for overdose deaths in Orange County between the ages of 25–44 year-olds.

The Orange County Sheriff's Department seized 104.6 pounds of fentanyl and 16,278 pills in 2021. In 2022, 449.9 pounds of fentanyl were seized, along with 405,283 pills. The prevalence of fentanyl across Orange County continues to grow, and we need common sense legislation to help law enforcement tackle this crisis.

Now, more than ever is the time to take action on measures that will preserve human life and improve the safety and well-being of all Californians. The City of Laguna Niguel calls on the Legislature to put forward comprehensive solutions to address the substance use crisis. For these reasons, the City of Laguna Niguel supports SB 1502 and encourages the Senate Committee on Appropriations to vote in support.

Should you have any questions about our position, please contact Kevin O'Connor, Management Assistant, at koconnor@cityoflagunaniquel.org.

Sincerely


Kelly Jennings
Mayor