

Work Session of the Sandy Springs City Council was held on September 5, 2023 at 6:00 PM, Mayor Rusty Paul presiding.

I. Staff Discussion Items

Mayor Rusty Paul called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

A. 2023-246 Fentanyl Awareness and Prevention Presentation

Armando Roche, Drug Intelligence Officer, Atlanta Carolinas HIDTA, and Craig Chandler, Deputy Chief of Police, Sandy Springs Police Department presented an update on Fentanyl Awareness and Prevention.

City Staff have worked closely with High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) to prepare a presentation in response to Councilmember John Paulson's request for further insights into fentanyl-related deaths and innovative strategies for community outreach. Armando Roche, Drug Intelligence Officer with the Atlanta Carolinas HIDTA, will provide a presentation on Fentanyl Awareness and Prevention, including the impact fentanyl has had in the North Georgia area.

With fentanyl-laced drugs becoming more common throughout the United States, the City of Sandy Springs recognizes the importance of establishing a preventative plan, involving early intervention and education, to increase awareness among residents about the dangers of fentanyl and the importance of responsible drug use. In addition to the Sandy Springs Police Department's current programming, such as National Prescription Drug Take Back day, and increasing outreach through social media, the City can create and implement a Drug Awareness Seminar for parents and teens, providing them with the essential information needed to empower parents to recognize warning signs, open communication, and take appropriate action. The City can also provide opportunities for businesses to contribute to public safety, ensuring establishments are equipped to handle emergencies regarding opioid overdoses by providing Narcan training and educating businesses on how to recognize the signs of an overdose.

Atlanta Carolinas HIDTA Drug Intelligence Officer Roche, a thirty-two year law enforcement veteran, said the update will be on both fentanyl and xylazine awareness and prevention. Previous assignments include supervisory roles in the U.S. and overseas in Gangs and Narcotics, the DEA, Jungle Operations, Financial Investigations, and currently serving as the Georgia representative for Atlanta-Carolinas HIDTA. In every state, as well as Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, there is a someone in this role. We are a law enforcement arm, and our mission is to disrupt and dismantle drug trafficking organizations, same as the DEA, but funded separately. There is also a Prevention and Treatment component managed by **Dan Salter, Retired DEA Supervisory Special Agent, and Executive Director-Atlanta-Carolinas HIDTA**. This component's mission is to get out and speak to everyone interested including schools, parents, grandparents, and caregivers. We are fearful because this is no longer recreational and could mean death the first time taking. We are trying to get the message out on the website and through a statewide billboard campaign in higher overdose areas, initiated by **Atlanta-Carolinas HIDTA Executive Director Salter**. The HIDTA Overdose Response Strategy initiative for the first time partners a public health analyst, funded by the CDC Foundation, with me as law enforcement, and was formulated to share public health and public safety information.

Sanford Stadium at the University of Georgia holds 93,000 people but we would need a larger facility to hold 109,000 people dying of overdoses, if we were the morgue for our nation. That is like 300 people crashing every day all year long on a 747 airplane. The numbers are staggering and unprecedented in my

law enforcement experience. This is a poisoning of our country.

The Georgia Department of Public Health reports, from 2019 to 2021 the total number of opioid related overdose deaths increased 101% from 853 to 1718 but will be higher in 2023. There is a backlog on information, and we do not have an update because of the process. These increases were driven largely by fentanyl, a powerful synthetic drug. According to the Georgia Department of Health, from 2019 to 2021 fentanyl related drug overdose deaths increased 124% from 614 to 1379. While fentanyl was observed in 57% of all overdoses, the national average was 66%.

Overdose fatalities in Georgia from 1999 to 2022, spiked in 2019 during COVID. People were isolated but it did not stop them from primarily seeking counterfeit pills with fentanyl. They may believe they are taking Percocet, but it is perfectly pressed fentanyl. It is almost impossible to distinguish between a fake and a real pill.

Of the 159 counties in GA, Fulton has the highest number of deaths at 255, and it could be higher. Fentanyl overdose is now the leading cause of death for those 18 to 45 years old. We have chosen to refer to these fatalities as poisonings because that is what it is.

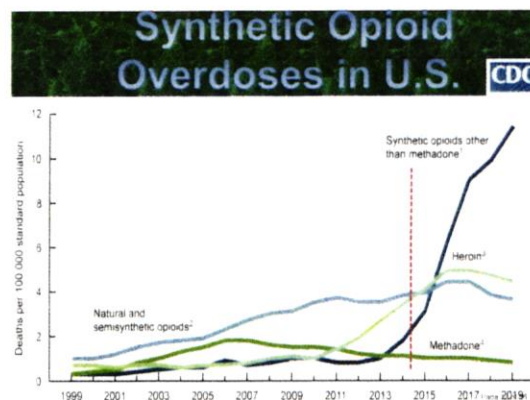
A SHORT VIDEO ON THE BACKGROUND OF FENTANYL IS SHOWN

Hundreds of millions of counterfeit pills are being produced in Mexico. As investigators, this tells us pill presses are here in Georgia and nationwide. They may be sending pills already pressed or, kilogram quantities of fentanyl. The counterfeit pill is our greatest threat. Before, someone may not have been seeking to take fentanyl, but they are now. On the black market, seven out of ten pills with fentanyl contain a lethal dose and this includes the streets and the dark web.

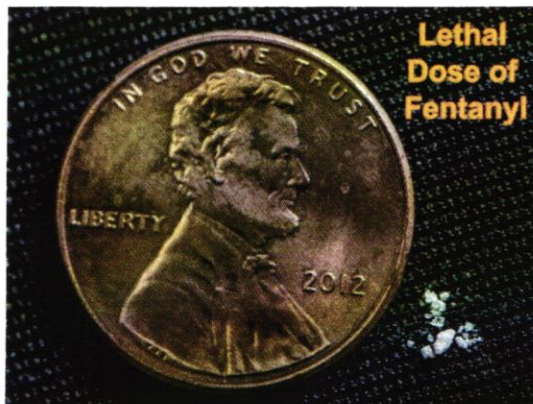
Secretly made pills masked as legitimate opioids were associated with many overdoses including clustered fatalities throughout the country due to their mimicking nature. Many unknowing users were unable to differentiate between prescription, legitimate, and inconsistent counterfeit pills illegally laced with life-threatening amounts of high potency fentanyl.

A SHORT VIDEO ON WHY ACCIDENTAL FENTANYL POISONINGS ARE OCCURRING IS SHOWN

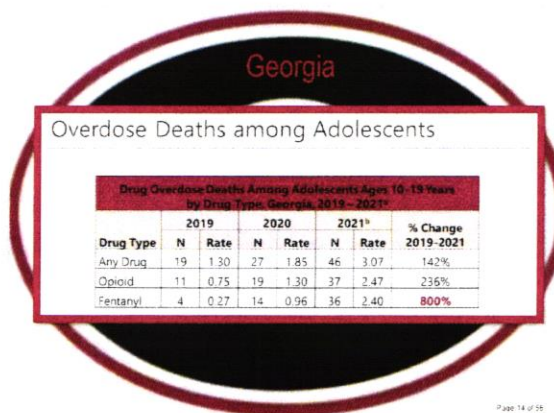
Fentanyl must be precisely measured and not have highly concentrated areas in the mix. Members of the Mexican cartel are mixing without precision and is why one person may live and one dies, and they do not care. They only want to sell the pills and it is \$0.22 at the border. In our area, it is about \$3.00 per fake prescription pill.



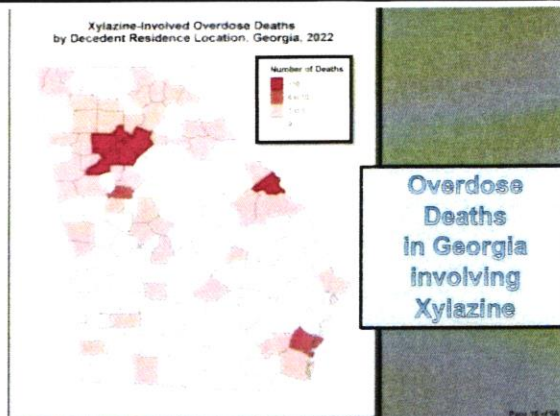
In 1999 fentanyl is introduced, and people are stealing patches from hospital dumpsters. The Mexican cartels realize this is cheap to make and can boost it to get the best product, because it is a business. It is also cheaper to cut, and they are making more volume with disregard to who dies. Unfortunately, in the streets when someone dies of an overdose, substance abusers not believing they will die, seek out who the dealer is because they figure it is potent. Micrograms of fentanyl can cause someone to die.



Overdose deaths for ages 10 to 19 in Georgia went up 142% between 2019 and 2021 and those with fentanyl involvement were up 800%.



Xylazine is a non-opioid and a large animal tranquilizer and is primarily diverted from horse farms. It is abused in Puerto Rico and is now cut with not only fentanyl but xylazine. It is not approved for human use and has been increasingly detected in the illicit drug supply and in drug overdoses around the nation and in Georgia. Many states have seen a dramatic increase in drug overdose deaths involving xylazine. Xylazine overdose may mimic the symptoms of an opioid overdose but, since xylazine is not an opioid, naloxone is not known to be effective in reversing the xylazine overdoses. Repeated injections of xylazine is associated with severe necrotic skin ulcerations. Persons who use drugs may not be aware of the presence of xylazine in their drug supply as in fentanyl, and it is critical for them to understand the risks and remain vigilant. This is tough because when they are addicted, they do not care. Drug traffickers are using it to give the product a punch and to create volume in their product.



Many are using fentanyl because it has become difficult to get prescription meds on the black market. Because of the demand, the cartels create and sell it, rather than stealing drugs from pharmacies and other places. It is concerning that the attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) drug is having significant problems with production because people start looking for it outside of the normal channels and could end up with fentanyl. Children could die as well as many college students look for drugs to help them study but do not know where it is coming from. In the police department, we are trying to work backwards so that we can prosecute the drug dealers that users are buying from, once we have determined that a death was related to fentanyl or another illicit drug. We have made one case so far. It is complicated and takes a lot of time, but we are committed.

Intervention

Signs of an overdose

- Small constricted pupils
- Choking sounds
- Falling asleep/losing consciousness
- Cold and/or discolored skin
- Slow/weak breathing
- Limp body
- What to do if you believe someone is experiencing an overdose
 - Call 911 immediately
 - Lay the person on their side to prevent choking
 - Administer naloxone, if available
 - Stay with them until emergency workers arrive
 - Try to keep the person awake/breathing

We are seeing fentanyl get more potent and the only choice we currently have is to work at the scene. Though we carry Narcan in our Police Department, we are finding one or two doses is not helping to bring people out of an overdose. If you believe someone is experiencing an overdose call 9-1-1 immediately. Naloxone or Narcan may be available over the counter and will not hurt the overdosed person if it is not an opioid. Lay the person on their side to prevent choking and stay with them until the emergency workers arrive.

Community Outreach

- Drug Awareness Seminar
 - Inviting parents/guardians and teens to discuss the dangers of drugs and how to intervene before it's too late
- Narcan Training
 - Providing training opportunities to local businesses
 - City Staff will continue to seek eligible grant opportunities (City and local businesses)

We make people aware about the dangers in our Citizens Police Academy and through the different outreaches within the police department. We are getting the message out that this is a poisoning and not simply an overdose. True victims most of the time do not know what they are taking.

Community Outreach

- Social Media Posts
 - National Fentanyl Prevention and Awareness Day™ - August
 - National Recovery Month - September
 - National Substance Abuse Prevention Month - October



Community Outreach



• National Opioid Settlement – City has received \$79,630.43

Eden Freeman, City Manager, stated one question asked on this topic during an earlier Council discussion was, what can the City do? Some of the things we can do is exactly what **Atlanta Carolinas HIDTA Drug Intelligence Officer Roche** and **Sandy Springs Deputy Chief of Police Chandler** discussed. We can sponsor opportunities for people to come together and have education and awareness of what is happening within communities. It is difficult for us to know the exact number of deaths for Sandy Springs because it is not reported that way through the state. We do know how many times we have had to administer Narcan in the last three years and the numbers are in this presentation. Under the national opioid settlement, we received \$79,630.43 in funding thus far. We must utilize these funds for opioid remediation and would start by doing some community outreach forums. We will also do sponsored posts on social media to educate the public of the dangers of fentanyl drug abuse if someone decides to take a drug from the street.

Councilmember John Paulson thanked **Atlanta Carolinas HIDTA Drug Intelligence Officer Roche** and **Sandy Springs Deputy Chief of Police Chandler** for their presentation. Has this topic been presented to public and private schools? If so, what is the perception?

Atlanta Carolinas HIDTA Drug Intelligence Officer Roche said together with **Atlanta-Carolinas HIDTA Executive Director Salter** several presentations were made in the City of Sandy Springs on behalf of **Kenneth DeSimone, Chief, Sandy Springs Police Department**. Following a presentation at a synagogue, a concerned citizen approached and connected me into the schools. Currently I am attempting to get into one high school. There are many hurdles to get this presentation there, but they are open to it. I have not presented at schools in the City or Fulton County, and it is difficult, but we need to get into schools.

Mayor Rusty Paul asked what the challenges are of getting into schools?

Sandy Springs Deputy Chief of Police Chandler said often it is the political messages. There may be some pushback, depending on how the topic is presented, because people do not like negative information. We have reached out to schools we have good relationships with. We are working with the Fulton County Schools Police as well to ensure we are getting the information out to kids and parents so they understand how dangerous these drugs can be.

Atlanta Carolinas HIDTA Drug Intelligence Officer Roche stated it causing psychosis in young people and is extremely dangerous.

Mayor Paul stated this is the age group being targeted. If it will be helpful, I can provide a signed letter to school administration that highlights the importance of presenting this information in schools.

Sandy Springs Deputy Chief of Police Chandler said according to statistics, the target group for

fentanyl is mostly middle-aged because it is a substitute for prescription meds. Kids may get it by taking it from their parent's medicine cabinet. Over the years, we partnered with the DEA to turn in prescription meds and make them less available. This drove heroin use and was later replaced with fentanyl. Fake pills are easier to get on the street because kids do not have to worry about getting it from the medicine cabinet, and this affects our children who do not know any better.

Atlanta Carolinas HIDTA Drug Intelligence Officer Roche said following my presentation at a few schools, football coaches approached me to talk to their teams, because when a player is injured, they are prescribed a ridiculous amount of opioids and could become hooked.

Councilmember Melody Kelley asked can we be provided the latest version of this presentation?

Raquel González, City Clerk, said the packet was received this afternoon and will be published after the meeting concludes.

Councilmember Kelley said Narcan may have been federally approved in 2015 which is around the time you started seeing hikes. It is challenging to see the impact of Narcan access.

Sandy Springs Deputy Chief of Police Chandler said it has had a positive impact on saving lives. As mentioned earlier, multiple applications must be given to get someone out of an overdose.

Atlanta Carolinas HIDTA Drug Intelligence Officer Roche said unfortunately you are saving that person at that moment but the minute they could go back they are going to go back.

Councilmember Kelley asked is there a Narcan access issue? Have we optimized the access to Narcan in communities?

Sandy Springs Deputy Chief of Police Chandler said Narcan was recently made available over the counter and it is up to the citizen to decide whether or not they are going to have some. The real problem is not finding a way to get out of it, it is finding a way to stop it, and we know where it is coming from and how it is getting here.

Councilmember Kelley asked are most deaths associated with a full-blown addiction?

Sandy Springs Deputy Chief of Police Chandler said many deaths are due to the first time taking. People believe they are taking an ADHD drug, Percocet, or some other type of normally legal drug they do not have a prescription for. The problem with fake pills is a high concentration of fentanyl which leads to their death.

Councilmember Kelley asked are many overdoses correlated to addiction?

Sandy Springs Deputy Chief of Police Chandler said yes. An addict is going to take whatever is most readily available. The drugs can be mixed with cocaine, heroin, or meth, which makes it worse.

Councilmember Kelley asked is treatment accessible for people who have problem?

Sandy Springs Deputy Chief of Police Chandler said this is not a law enforcement issue but public health.

Councilmember Kelley asked what is not mixed with fentanyl?

Atlanta Carolinas HIDTA Drug Intelligence Officer Roche said fentanyl is cheap to produce and is cut into everything. They do not care if it kills, or someone becomes an addict, because they will always have customers.

Councilmember Kelley asked what are the best preventative measures?

Atlanta Carolinas HIDTA Drug Intelligence Officer Roche said preventative measures include billboards, websites, and parenting.

Councilmember Tibby DeJulio said there may be advertisements for overseas pharmacies on Facebook or television for example that do not require a prescription. Does this have fentanyl?

Atlanta Carolinas HIDTA Drug Intelligence Officer Roche said nothing prescribed from a pharmacy does. People with acute pain like cancer patients for example, need fentanyl. It is being diverted and abused and what you see on television is not a legitimate company advertising. It is a problem that they are getting people hooked on something when a Tylenol can be taken.

Councilmember DeJulio asked what about ads on Facebook?

Sandy Springs Deputy Chief of Police Chandler said be suspicious of any place that is not a pharmacy. See the person with the credentials to prescribe the medications.

Councilmember Jody Reichel stated the presentation was enlightening. Where is pill pressing happening? Could it be a kitchen or a special set-up for example?

Atlanta Carolinas HIDTA Drug Intelligence Officer Roche said people are dying because you do not need that. Three people for example can do this in a garage after ordering the pieces online from China. They wait until the whole mechanism is put together then go to work.

Councilmember Reichel asked has this happened in the City of Sandy Springs?

Sandy Springs Deputy Chief of Police Chandler said not specifically in Sandy Springs but some of our task forces have seized pill presses in Georgia.

Councilmember Reichel asked can someone receive pills in the mail in the black market?

Atlanta Carolinas HIDTA Drug Intelligence Officer Roche said it is the dark web.

Councilmember Reichel asked does someone offer to sell the pills on the dark web?

Atlanta Carolinas HIDTA Drug Intelligence Officer Roche said yes and they deliver to your home.

Councilmember Reichel asked do they assume it is not fentanyl?

Atlanta Carolinas HIDTA Drug Intelligence Officer Roche said they know what they are sending and seven out of ten are counterfeit. They are working off reviews, not like a scam. There are very few scams in the dark web. They are going to send you the product because they want to keep their reviews high. Traffickers who could be anywhere operate off reviews. They keep sending, switch domains, and continue doing it. It is unbelievable. We have created dedicated cyber units at DEA to address the dark

web and it is an incredibly difficult task because you do not know where they are. Solicitations on the dark web are not just drugs but involves kids and human traffickers. It is disgusting and we must advise undercover officers when working on a case.

Councilmember Reichel asked are officers continually monitoring the dark web?

Sandy Springs Deputy Chief of Police Chandler said we have officers that work on federal agency task forces involved in investigations that can go into the dark web.

Atlanta Carolinas HIDTA Drug Intelligence Officer Roche said we are considering hiring someone to just monitor what they see on the dark web and pass that information along to investigators.

Mayor Paul thanked **Sandy Springs Deputy Chief of Police Chandler** and **Atlanta Carolinas HIDTA Drug Intelligence Officer Roche** for the presentation. This has been unbelievable. This body will be happy to do anything that will help open doors.

B. 2023-247 2022 Consolidated Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER)

Michele McIntosh-Ross, Planning & Zoning Manager, presented the 2022 Consolidated Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER).

In accordance with the federal regulations, 24 CFR, Part 91, the City of Sandy Springs is preparing a draft Consolidated Annual Performance & Evaluation Report ("CAPER") for Fiscal Year 2021-2022. The CAPER is an end-of-year requirement of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development ("HUD"). The purpose of the CAPER is to provide an overall evaluation of federally-funded activities and accomplishments to HUD and the community. The performance report is prepared with public review and comment for the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 CAPER and is submitted electronically to HUD via the Integrated Disbursement and Information System ("IDIS").

Staff prepared the draft CAPER and it is available for the public review and comment on the City's website and no action is needed by Council tonight. Funds received from the CDBG program have been designated to design and construct public facilities. This is for sidewalks along Roswell Road to benefit low to moderate income residents in the community. The progress of projects during the reporting period of July 2021 to June of 2022 has been in accordance with the goals of the annual action plan. We are continuing with Phase III of the South Roswell Road Multi-year Sidewalk Project, design and installation of pedestrian lighting on North Bridge between Roswell Road and SR 400, and design and environmental work for streetscape improvement along Roswell Road, South of I-285 from Northwood to Long Island Drive. There will be a public hearing at the September 19, 2023 Mayor and City Council meeting with a resolution for your consideration to approve the CAPER draft. To date, we have not received any comments on the draft which posted August 15. We encourage anyone interested to review and comment before September 19.

Councilmember John Paulson asked is a hardcopy available or is this only electronic?

Planning & Zoning Manager McIntosh-Ross said it is available electronically but we can provide a hardcopy.

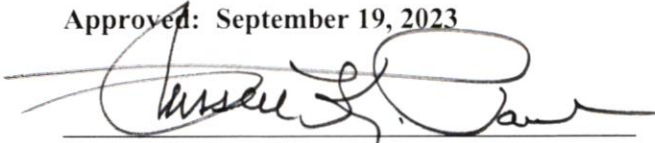
Councilmember John Paulson said my concern is if you print one, you may have to print fifty. This is

an inquiry.

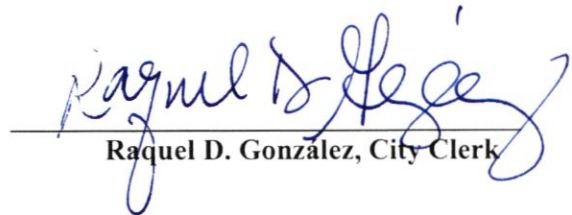
II. City Council Discussion Items

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:52 p.m.

Approved: September 19, 2023

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Russell K. Paul, Mayor

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Raquel D. Gonzalez", written over a horizontal line.

Raquel D. Gonzalez, City Clerk