

May 11, 2023

Dear Seattle City Council Members,

On behalf of thousands of employees and hundreds of local business owners and managers, we urge you to support the proposal from City Attorney Ann Davison and Councilmembers Sara Nelson and Alex Pedersen to decrease public drug use and curb the ongoing fentanyl epidemic in our city. Seattle's drug crisis is a public health emergency that is worsening by the day and one that demands urgent action.

Over the past decade, we have seen synthetic drug use grow exponentially in our community. Methamphetamine and fentanyl are associated with significant public health risks to all people who are exposed to them on our streets, in our parks and on our public transit systems. Fentanyl is the largest contributor to overdose deaths in Seattle, responsible for most of the 589 drug-related deaths last year and with an estimated 1,500 deaths predicted this year. At a critical time for the recovery of our downtown and our neighborhoods, the use of dangerous drugs in our shared spaces is a significant contributing factor to residents, employees, families, and visitors feeling unsafe exploring our city or returning to the office.

To combat the crisis, we must focus on three critical activities: interrupt the upstream supply of these substances coming into our community; curb the street sales and public use of these highly addictive and deadly drugs; and increase investments in on-demand treatment options. We are pleased with the passage of the King County Crisis Care Centers Levy as a step in the right direction toward increasing treatment beds, but we also must address the very real public safety and health risks associated with public drug use. We cannot stand idly by while people continue to die on our streets every day and our communities suffer the impacts of these harmful behaviors.

Although we fully support a statewide law on drug possession, the state legislature has thus far failed to act. Therefore, we urge the City Council to address this public health emergency head on and with the urgency it demands. With a crisis this real impacting so many every day, we should not wait for the state to act. Now is the time for local action.

Our coalition is committed to making our city a healthy, vibrant, welcoming place for all. We look forward to working with the City to ensure we do everything we can to curb the alarming destruction that these substances continue to have on our neighbors and our city.

Thank you for your commitment to our city's safety and prosperity.

Sincerely,



seattle metropolitan chamber of commerce

