

# Weiner and Farah: CHICAGO, OTHER CITIES DOUBLING OVERDOSE DEATHS DURING COVID POINT TO URGENT NEED FOR MORE TREATMENT

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- Former White House Drug Policy spokesman Robert Weiner and senior policy analyst Wesam Farah have published an article in The Chicago Daily Herald today asserting that Chicago and other cities doubling overdose deaths during Covid-19 point to urgent need for more treatment.



Robert Weiner

Weiner and Farah point out, "According to new data from the American Medical Association, Chicago has seen a marked increase in drug overdose deaths during the Covid-19 epidemic, stemming from the stress, economic anxiety, and loneliness involved in the crisis. The increase points to the need for more treatment."

They explain, "Chicago's drug overdose rates have soared over 100% since last year, with around 924 cases in 2020 so far. Shootings are also up 70%, with May 31st being Chicago's deadliest day in decades."

They quote former Chicago mayor Rahm Emanuel as having said "Treatment keeps the crime off the streets."

They continue, "In addition to the Chicago metropolitan area, the American Medical Association has rung the alarm on several other states and cities, including New York, Milwaukee, and Virginia Beach--each recording nearly double their normal amount of overdose cases."

They contend, "While the traditional school of thinking towards the matter leans towards

increasing the availability of methadone and naloxone, as an effective antidote and increasing first responder training to reduce overdose deaths, this fails to tackle the root cause and is a reactive rather than proactive form of treatment.”

They assert, “To tackle the root cause, we must acknowledge that Chicago’s opioid crisis has disproportionately affected the African American community. Targeted efforts should help affected populations through community education events, advertising, addiction centers providing treatment close to affected neighborhoods and schools, and better education in predominantly black and minority high schools.”

They continue, “ exposure to opioids often starts in one’s formative years, education and programs in schools can help curb addiction in vulnerable communities. This is in many ways a “long term project,” necessary to engender change in future years. ”

They go on, “Concentrated school projects in vulnerable areas have led to significant decline in tobacco use once proper schooling measures were enacted—a 50% drop in California.”

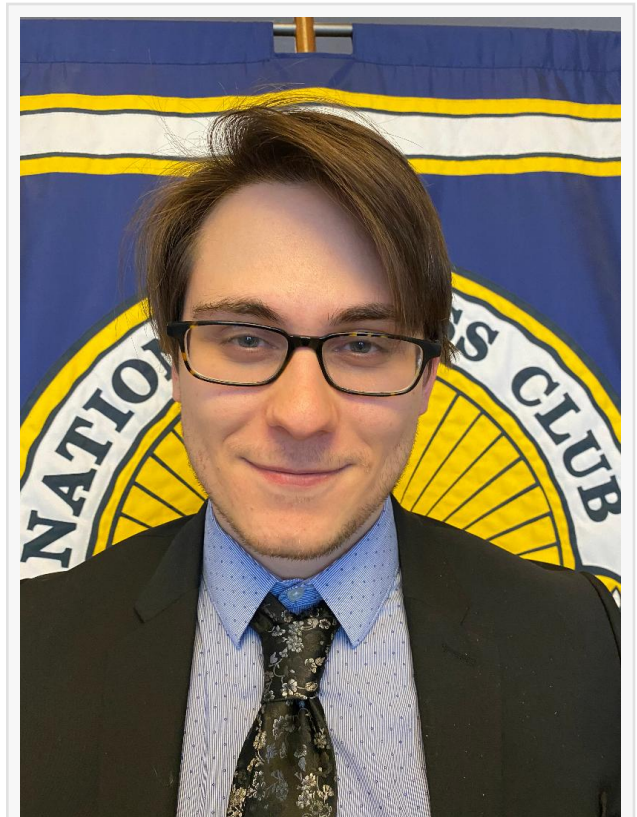
They contend that to prevent future overdoses, cities must “Identify the worst affected areas and examine the level of social and community engagement extant in said areas.”

“Enact a system of programs, support networks, and school education within those communities in order to ensure they are well informed and are not often isolated, or feel abandoned by their communities. ”

“Increase financial aid stimulus for individuals and small businesses.”

“Create programs based on Community-based participatory research--a methodology that enhances engagement efforts to reduce the misrepresentation and exploitation of researched populations and improves health and well-being through social change and meaningful community engagement.”

“Continue the very effective expansion of Naloxone and other life saving drugs now used by police and first responders as a short-term measure to save lives in danger from overdose.”



Wesam Farah

They conclude, "While these measures will not be perfect, immediate solutions to the ongoing opioid crisis, they will help flatten and later lower the curve while establishing lasting community change."

Link to published article: <https://www.dailyherald.com/discuss/20200716/chicagos-increased-overdose-deaths-during-covid-crisis-point-to-the-need-for-more-treatment>

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