



**City of Phoenix**

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

November 7, 2017

Ed Zuercher  
City Manager  
200 West Washington Street  
Phoenix, AZ 85003

Dear Mr. Zuercher:

The opioid epidemic has become the deadliest drug crisis in our nation's history, and Phoenix is not immune from its tragic impact. Opioid addiction affects all walks of life in our city, and does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race or socioeconomic background.

Since June 15, at least 538 Arizonans have died a suspected opioid-related death, and there have been more than 2,300 possible opioid overdoses in Maricopa County alone. The rapid rise of opioid use and deaths are a direct result of the pharmaceutical industry's fraudulent marketing campaign that minimized the risks of opioids. Pharmaceutical companies are making billions while people suffer and families are torn apart, while governments shoulder the burden at every level.

This epidemic has created an incredible strain on the City of Phoenix. Overdoses are so common that every Phoenix Fire Department engine and rescue vehicle carries doses of naloxone, an opioid antidote – and overdoses that require an ambulance trip are more frequent. Police detectives and patrol officers experience additional demands in response to opioid-related calls, and taxpayers are paying additional jail costs. Opioids pose new threats to our neighborhoods, and contribute to the City's homelessness challenges. Make no mistake: These examples barely scratch the surface of how our community has been affected.

We must urgently take action, and respectfully ask that you place an item on the November 15 Formal Agenda to direct the City Attorney to solicit qualified law firms to represent the City in a legal action against opioid manufacturers and distributors to begin to turn the tide in this national crisis. We believe that resources recovered from this action can better equip first responders and neighborhoods with the tools they need to respond to the crisis, as well as help those who are suffering from addiction themselves.

Sincerely,

Greg Stanton  
Mayor

Thelda Williams  
Councilmember

Debra Stark  
Councilmember