



Pierce County

Office of the County Council

930 Tacoma Avenue South, Room 1046
Tacoma, Washington 98402-2176
(253) 798-3635
FAX (253) 798-7509
1-800-992-2456
www.piercecountywa.org/council

August 8, 2017

Governor Jay Inslee
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 40002
Olympia, WA, 98504-0002

Dear Governor Inslee:

In the United States, The Center for Disease Control and Prevention has characterized opioid abuse as a public health epidemic. Pierce County is not immune from this and has been disproportionately burdened. Opioid sales and abuse are causing an increase in overdoses, deaths and a rise in crime. Therefore, the undersigned believe and declare Pierce County in a State of Opioid Crisis.

Pierce County suffers these impacts:

- From 2011 to 2015, Pierce County experienced 10.2 opioid overdose deaths per 100,000 residents, compared to the state average of 9.8.
- Treatment admissions for prescription opioids and heroin have more than doubled since 2007.
- First time admissions for treatment of any opioid has spiked amongst the 18 to 29 year-old demographic, increasing from 18% of total first time admissions in 2002 to 58% in 2015.
- Based on 2015 syringe exchange data, at least 2,137 drug users currently inject opioids.

The current state of affairs is unacceptable. To protect the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of Pierce County, action must be taken to combat this epidemic. A Pierce County opioid task force is currently developing an action plan focusing on prevention and education, treatment, and a coordinated law enforcement response. Our community is actively engaged.

This declaration of crisis is an important step in addressing this emergency.

Sincerely,

Dan Roach District 1 Pam Roach District 2 Jim McCune District 3 Connie Ladenburg District 4
 Rick Talbert District 5 Doug Richardson District 6, Chair Derek Young District 7