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Council Bill Would Put Anti-Drug-Overdose Kits in Public Schools

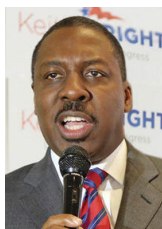
By CRYSTALLEWIS Sep 1, 2017



RAFAEL SALAMANCA Jr.: Concern about opioid ODs.

City Council Member Rafael Salamanca introduced a bill Aug. 24 that would require schools to carry kits to prevent drug overdoses.

“We’ve seen too many overdoses related to opioids this year, and overdose numbers continue to rise alarmingly amongst teens and young persons in particular,” Mr. Salamanca said in a statement. “This is a tragic problem, and any solution we have to help prevent overdoses, particularly through the use of naloxone, should be implemented.”



GREGORY FLOYD: Opposes new burden on ‘Agents.’

Naloxone is a drug that is injected into the body to block the effects of opioids. The kits would be equipped with Narcan, a brand of naloxone.

A Rise in Abuse

According to data released by the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene this past July, 14 percent of students misused prescription drugs in 2015, up from 9 percent in 2011.

There were 69 overdose deaths from opioids among 15- to 18-year-olds in the city from 2000-2016, which accounted for less than 1 percent of the 9,698 opioid-related overdose deaths during that same period.

To combat the increase in opioid use, the NYPD has issued Narcan kits to 23,000

police officers. In March, the Mayor announced a \$38-million-a-year effort to cut the number of deaths from opioid overdoses by a third over the next five years.

A spokesperson for the Department of Education said that there haven't been any known cases of opioid overdoses in a city school since 2005.

Mayor: Will Review It

"The safety and well-being of our students always come first, and we look forward to reviewing this bill," said Olivia Lapeyrolerie, a spokesperson for the Mayor's Office.

This isn't the first proposal to require overdose kits in the city's public schools: in July, it was reported that the Police Department was considering a plan to authorize School Safety Agents to carry Narcan.

Michael Reilly, Staten Island's Community Education Council president, wrote to NYPD Assistant Chief Brian Conroy about the idea, with Mr. Conroy responding that the department was reviewing its current policies in schools, "including the possibility of Narcan training."

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Gregory Floyd, president of Teamsters Local 237, which represents School Safety Agents, said that the NYPD has not spoken to the union about the plan.

Mr. Floyd called the plan a "knee-jerk reaction," and added that this responsibility shouldn't belong to School Safety Agents because they aren't medically trained.

"If this was a carefully-thought-out plan, there would be a medical person on staff

at each school who is equipped to deal with all emergencies. That's the prudent thing to do," he said.

For First-Responders

Mr. Reilly said that because Narcan is a first-responder's tool, it makes sense for School Safety Agents to be equipped with the drug.

He said he got the idea because some School Safety Agents in his district received Narcan training from a community-based organization, and that he hoped the plan could be implemented as a pilot program in high schools.

"If you can save one life, why wouldn't you?" Mr. Reilly asked.

