



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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***** PRESS RELEASE*****

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVES
LEASE FOR SAN FRANCISCO'S FIRST DRUG SOBERING
CENTER PROPOSED BY MAYOR LONDON BREED**

SOMA RISE Center to provide 20 short-term beds and support services for people at risk of drug overdoses

San Francisco, CA – Today the Board of Supervisors unanimously approved a lease introduced by Mayor London N. Breed for San Francisco's first drug sobering center. The site, known as the SOMA RISE (Recover, Initiate, Support, and Engagement) Center, will serve people at risk of drug overdoses from methamphetamine, fentanyl and other substances, by providing a safe place where they can come inside, get off the streets, and receive care.

The SOMA RISE Center, located at 1076 Howard Street is expected to open in fall 2021. It will serve the South of Market and Tenderloin neighborhoods, where cases of drug overdose deaths are the highest in the City. This 18-month neighborhood pilot project is one of several innovative efforts underway to help people experiencing homelessness and behavioral health issues, such as substance use disorders, to get off the streets, into housing, and connected with services.

"The rise in drug use and overdoses in San Francisco shows that we have to take action and try new things to get people the help they need," said Mayor Breed. "Opening a sobering center provides our outreach teams with a place to take someone who shouldn't be left alone on the street where they can sober up, settle down, and get connected to other services. It's a safer option for the people in need of help, it will improve the conditions on our streets, and it's an approach that just makes a lot more sense than what we're doing now."

San Francisco is seeing a record number of deaths from drug overdoses in recent years, due largely to the arrival of the powerful synthetic opioid fentanyl. With its 20-bed capacity and services that include rest, monitoring, food and water, hygiene, health assessments and more, the SOMA RISE Center will provide a safe and secure temporary location for people to stabilize. Clients will then engage in one-on-one peer counseling about wellness and recovery options available to them and be connected and transported to appropriate services or their next step designations.

"Drug overdose deaths are a serious public health crisis that we must take immediate action to address," said Dr. Naveena Bobba, Deputy Director of the San Francisco Department of Public Health. "The SOMA RISE Center will bring help to the individuals most at risk and to the neighborhoods where its needed most."



A drug sobering center was the top recommendation of the Methamphetamine Task Force and will be one of the first in the nation to provide an indoor monitoring site specifically for drug intoxication. A low-barrier approach to behavioral health services help people achieve better health, including recovery and wellness, and provides an alternative approach to law enforcement and unnecessary emergency room visits and hospital stays.

“The SOMA RISE Center will be a crucial component of behavioral health services transformation in San Francisco. Its innovative approach will engage people who use drugs and are at risk of overdose and link them to immediate and ongoing care and treatment,” said Dr. Hillary Kunins, the Director of Behavioral Health Services and Mental Health SF for the San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH). “The evaluation of this pilot project will inform the potential opening of other sobering centers in the City where we know there is need.”

Clients are transported to the center by the Street Crisis Response Team, Street Medicine, or community paramedics and the center also accepts walk in clients. Following a community outreach process that resulted in additional benefits to the community for street and safety improvements, the San Francisco Health Commission awarded the contract to operate the SOMA RISE Center to HealthRIGHT 360 on June 1.

“It is critical at a time when we are seeing an enormous increase in overdose deaths that we create safe and compassionate low-barrier services that address the needs of people who use drugs. The SOMA RISE Center is a response to this very need and will be an entry point for people to get connected to other services. We are proud to be involved in this project and believe that it will improve outcomes for those that need help the most,” said Vitka Eisen, President and CEO of HealthRIGHT 360.

HealthRIGHT 360 is a non-profit community provider of residential and outpatient service for health care, mental health, and substance use disorder services that serves 15,000 San Franciscans annually.

Under Mayor Breed’s leadership, the City is focused on addressing homelessness, mental health, and substance use disorders, with a focus on three main areas: creating more places for people to go; expanding outreach and coordination among services and placement; and strengthening data and transparency tracking tools. The drug sobering center will make progress on all three areas by offering a new place for people to go and get connected with existing City services. The drug sobering center pilot will be evaluated and use of the facility will be tracked by DPH, furthering the City’s efforts to ensure programs are working and improve services as needed.

More information about the SOMA RISE Center can be found on this [Frequently Asked Questions page](#).

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