



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

Tuesday, October 22, 2019

Contact: Mayor's Office of Communications, 415-554-6131

**\*\*\* PRESS RELEASE \*\*\***

**MAYOR LONDON BREED AND SUPERVISOR RAFAEL  
MANDELMAN ANNOUNCE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM  
METH TASK FORCE**

*Task Force comprised of community members, public health professionals, researchers, substance use treatment providers, emergency responders, criminal justice and law enforcement officials, and people with substance use experience issue recommendations including the creation of Meth Sobering Centers*

**San Francisco, CA** — Mayor London N. Breed and Supervisor Rafael Mandelman today released the [final report and recommendations](#) from the Methamphetamine Task Force that they launched in February this year. The Task Force was co-chaired by Supervisor Mandelman and Dr. Grant Colfax, Director of the Department of Public Health.

After meeting over the past six months, the Task Force developed a list of 17 recommendations, several of which Mayor Breed and the Department of Public Health have incorporated into UrgentCareSF, the Mayor's comprehensive plan to provide mental health care and substance use treatment to the approximately 4,000 people who are most in need in San Francisco.

Mayor Breed and the Department of Public Health are working to implement several of the recommendations included in the Task Force's report. Today, Mayor Breed announced that the Department of Public Health is taking action to identify a site for a Meth Sobering Center, which will be a safe place for people who are under the influence of methamphetamines, or meth, to get off the streets. Opening meth sobering centers was incorporated into Mayor Breed's comprehensive behavioral health plan—UrgentCareSF.

The Sobering Center will help to reduce visits to the Psychiatric Emergency Services at Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital and hospital emergency departments throughout the City, where people who are under the influence of drugs, but not in need of emergency medical or psychiatric services, often seek care. It will also provide a new destination for the San Francisco Police Department and the San Francisco Fire Department's EMS-6 team to bring people using meth, enhancing their ability to respond to street conditions. The Sobering Center will provide safe a place for individuals to connect with services and treatment.

“The Meth Task Force's report will help guide our approach to addressing the meth use that is hurting so many people in our city,” said Mayor Breed. “We need a citywide approach to address the combined challenges of substance use disorder, mental illness, and homelessness, and we're already taking action to implement several of the recommendations the Task Force has provided for our consideration as part of UrgentCareSF. Open air drug use on our streets is unacceptable



and we're especially eager to move forward with the creation of a Meth Sobering Center, which will help get people off the streets and connected with the services and care they need."

The report's recommendations are organized into four main areas:

- Investing in care models to reduce harm and promote recovery and wellness;
- Improving access to treatment and housing;
- Building capacity of staff who interact with and provide services to people who use meth; and
- Strengthening coordination of City services and systems.

"San Francisco has a meth problem. We see it on our streets, in our hospital emergency rooms, in our jails, and all too often in the growing numbers of meth-related overdoses," said Supervisor Rafael Mandelman. "I am grateful to Mayor Breed for convening the Meth Task Force and to the Task Force members for sharing their wisdom and expertise. The recommendations presented in this Report include life-saving interventions and long-term solutions to the city's meth epidemic. These solutions are urgently needed and I look forward to working with Mayor Breed, the Department of Public Health, my colleagues on the Board of Supervisors and all of our community partners to ensure the further development and effective implementation of these recommendations."

Meth use in San Francisco poses a serious public health and public safety challenge. In 2018, over 126 people died of a meth overdose, and the number of overdose deaths from meth rose 500% in the last ten years. The Task Force was created to develop policy recommendations on harm reduction strategies to decrease risks for people under the influence of meth, identify best practices for treatment and service options for people who use meth, and reduce the negative medical and social impacts of meth use on San Franciscans.

"The recommendations of the Meth Task Force will save lives and improve quality of life for all San Franciscans," said Dr. Grant Colfax, Director of Health. "I am inspired by the Task Force's collective vision that San Francisco is a city that operates from a place of compassion, and we are driven by the conviction that all individuals deserve an opportunity to achieve their health and wellness goals. As San Francisco has courageously demonstrated leadership on so many fronts throughout history, so, too, will we push forward in this effort."

The Task Force is comprised of a wide array of community members, including medical and public health professionals, researchers, representatives of community based organizations, substance use treatment providers, emergency responders, criminal justice and law enforcement officials, drug policy experts, and people with substance use experience.

In addition to recommending the creation of a Sobering Center, the Task Force proposed that the City strengthen resources for mental health and substance use crisis response to be able to immediately move individuals in meth-induced crisis off the streets and into care. This recommendation was incorporated into UrgentCareSF, and as part of that initiative, the City will



be adding more behavioral health resources to accompany police on calls regarding people in crisis.

The report recommends that the City increase the availability of safe indoor spaces, such as drop-in centers, shelters, and navigation centers. The City is making progress on that recommendation and the Mayor's goal of adding 1,000 shelter beds, and has opened 346 new shelter beds, with 444 either in construction in the pipeline. Mayor Breed also recently announced the addition of 14 new Hummingbird psychiatric respite beds, thanks to a partnership with Tipping Point Community.

The Task Force recommended that the City expand the availability of treatment beds at multiple levels of care for people with mental illness and substance use disorders. The City has added 212 behavioral health treatment beds and will add additional treatment beds across the continuum of harm reduction, treatment, and recovery services as part of UrgentCareSF.

The issue of meth use is connected to Mayor Breed's efforts to expand conservatorship in San Francisco. With a new conservatorship program under Senator Scott Wiener's Senate Bills 1045 and 40, the City will be able to better treat people suffering from severe mental illness and substance use issues, and provide them with permanent supportive housing. In order to be eligible for conservatorship, an individual must be dual-diagnosed with a serious mental illness and with a substance use disorder, and have been brought to the psychiatric emergency room at least eight times in a 12-month period under an involuntary "5150" emergency hold. A 5150 hold is issued to individuals who present an immediate danger to themselves or others, or are gravely disabled and unable to provide for their basic needs. The vast majority of individuals that could be considered for this new program use meth—among people with at least eight 5150 psychiatric holds, nearly nine in ten used meth.

More information about the Meth Task Force and the final report and recommendations can be found here: [www.sfdph.org/dph/comupg/knowlcol/MethTaskForce/default.asp](http://www.sfdph.org/dph/comupg/knowlcol/MethTaskForce/default.asp)

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