



Presented in Committee - September 27, 2019

Treatment on Demand Coalition

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Who are we?

A coalition of community organizations, service providers, affordable housing developers, residents and consumers who are concerned about the lack of access to treatment services in SF, (including Community Housing Partnership, Coalition on Homelessness, Tenderloin Neighborhood Dev. Corp., Glide, SF Aids Foundation, Senior and Disability Action, Taxpayers for Public Safety, St Anthony's, supportive Housing Providers Network).

We are working to improve access and availability of mental health and substance use services at every point in San Francisco.


Treatment on Demand is a policy supporting the immediate entry into substance and mental health treatment for anyone who asks for it.



San Francisco's Treatment on Demand Policy

-2008's Proposition T (Treatment on Demand Act) mandated that DPH:

- maintain an adequate level of free and low-cost substance abuse treatment services and residential treatment capacity sufficient to meet existing demand”.
- Issue a yearly report with an assessment of the demand for substance use treatment in SF and a plan to meet the need.
- the city budget should match that need.



Implementation of the Treatment on Demand Act

- Has San Francisco fulfilled the requirements of Proposition T and followed the will of the voters?
- San Francisco currently has substantial barriers to access to treatment, which disproportionately affects low income people, people experiencing homelessness and communities of color.
- The city has no analysis of the overall demand for services, nor a plan to meet that demand.



What does it mean when people don't get access to treatment?

- Homelessness increases, and those with housing become more vulnerable to losing it
- Low income San Franciscans are incarcerated more, many times the only way to get access to treatment is through the criminal justice system
- Wait lists become so long people stop seeking treatment
- Conditions deteriorate and become much more severe and thus harder and more costly to treat
- There is a higher likelihood of psychotic episodes that take place on the streets



Identified Solutions

- Increased slots for case management, residential beds, and staffing for behavioral health services providers
- Increases in supportive housing
- Alternatives to incarceration for people with behavioral health needs
- Coordinated care, including a formal process of communication between the DPH, HSH and other departments that affect the behavioral health system
- A “one stop shop” where those needing treatment can go at any time to immediately access services



Why we need a task force

- The city has not fulfilled its voter approved mandate to report to the public the need for behavioral health services nor conducted an evaluation of whether it is being met.
- Indications are that the city is not providing treatment on demand, as required by law and too many are suffering as a result.
- San Francisco needs a comprehensive assessment of the need and the gaps in our behavioral health system so that we can create and implement substantive solutions as soon as possible.