



March 20, 2025

Connie Chan, Supervisor First District
Stephen Sherrill, Supervisor Second District
Danny Sauter, Supervisor Third District
Joel Engardio, Supervisor Fourth District
Bilal Mahmood, Supervisor Fifth District
Matt Dorsey, Supervisor Sixth District

Myrna Melgar, Supervisor Seventh District
Rafael Mandelman, Supervisor Eight District
Jackie Fielder, Supervisor Ninth District
Shamann Walton, Supervisor Tenth District
Chyanne Chen, Supervisor Eleventh District

Legislative Chamber, Room 250
City Hall, 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102

Re: Opposition to File NO. 250190 Recovery First Ordinance

Dear San Francisco Board of Supervisors,

We write in respectful opposition to the Ordinance NO. 250190, also known as the 'Recovery First Drug Policy,' amending our city's drug policy to singularly focus on the abstention and cessation of drug use. As advocates working on policies that prioritize social support and community well-being, we believe that San Francisco's drug policies should be grounded in scientific evidence, health, and equity.

We share in the vision and the urgency that individuals with substance use disorders (SUD) receive the urgent treatment that they desire and need, limiting or preventing the adverse consequences associated with SUD. However, we are deeply concerned with the introduction of the Recovery First Ordinance, which, as written, signifies a drastic departure from San Francisco's long-established data-driven drug and harm reduction policies. The proposed measure presents a very narrow view of recovery, obscuring the different pathways toward recovery. **Recovery is**

not a one-size fits-all, rather, it exists on a spectrum. The federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration crafted a consensus definition to capture the nuance of recovery as, “a process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live self-directed lives, and strive to reach their full potential”.¹

For over thirty years, San Francisco has been at the forefront of adopting innovative strategies that reduce health risks associated with drug use and that improve the recovery of people who use drugs (PWUD). A critical component of such measures has been the implementation of harm reduction policies and practices, driven by community public health strategies that engage directly with people who use drugs to prevent overdose and infectious disease transmission, improve physical, mental, and social well-being, and offer low-barrier options for accessing healthcare services, including substance use and mental health treatment.

In 2000, San Francisco’s Health Commission passed a resolution adopting a Harm Reduction Policy for Substance Use, sexually transmitted disease, and HIV treatment and prevention services, and/or programs that serve people who use drugs in their programs.² The adoption of this policy followed a community-led building of programming and services to support people who used drugs impacted by AIDS. It signaled San Francisco’s openness to embed an evidence-based approach into their system of care and support services to meet people where they are and build trusting relationships that will connect people to health and social services. Moreover, it represented a commitment to ensure that drug policies and services to people impacted by drug use were guided by a public health approach, recognizing that cessation of all drug use is not necessary to receive supportive services. The Recovery First Ordinance will undermine a well-developed drug user health framework that maximizes the wellbeing of our communities by focusing the city’s drug policy solely on one approach. The abstinence only model ignores the fact that recovery from substance use is not a linear nor rigid path and forecloses on the continuum of approaches available to support individuals in their recovery journey.

The reality is that recovery from substance use is a complex and often unpredictable process influenced by each individual’s circumstances, and cessation of drug use is one part of the many components of recovery. Returning to drug use, or relapsing into substance use, is a component of the recovery change process, and for this reason it is critical to implement strategies to improve the retention of non-abstinent patients in the continuum of care. We are deeply concerned about San Francisco adopting a definition of recovery that is severely limited. This definition is not aligned with best treatment practices, but rather places abstinence-based models as the only standard for treatment when people need access to a variety of treatment options beyond medication-assisted treatment, such as contingency management, behavioral health treatment, and trauma-recovery services.³

¹ “Recovery and Support,” February 16, 2023. <https://www.samhsa.gov/substance-use/recovery>.

² Harm Reduction Training Institute (HRTI). <https://www.sf.gov/information--harm-reduction-training-institute-hrti>

³ National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). “Treatment and Recovery,” July 6, 2020. <https://nida.nih.gov/publications/drugs-brains-behavior-science-addiction/treatment-recovery>.

We also believe that the language of this ordinance could exacerbate the existing stigma against substance use disorders and substance users and thus, inhibit successful outreach and connection of PWUD to services. Having a policy defining recovery as being “abstinent from drug use” will discourage people from seeking overdose prevention and other critical resources, knowing that any indication of their substance use could prevent access or remove them from shelter, housing or treatment. Alarmingly, this policy could redirect funding for abstinence-based models only, stripping harm reduction-based programs from critical funding necessary to distribute overdose prevention medication and life-saving harm reduction supplies, offer drug and treatment-related education, and facilitate connections to social services and treatment. We risk isolating individuals away from services when San Francisco should address this from both angles and incorporate harm reduction principles into treatment models to match people's experiences better.

Investing in public health approaches will help people stay on their path towards recovery, which include but are not limited to shelter and housing options that meet their needs before and after exiting treatment; having access to low-barrier and effective treatment services, naloxone and overdose response training and education, and drug checking services. These low barrier treatment options still lack adequate funding to meet the scale of need - we must build up the spectrum of effective programs, not narrow our scope of care. San Francisco must also deliver on the promise to establish wellness hubs, a key cornerstone of the 2022 Overdose Prevention Plan to provide linkages to care, which will strengthen our current system of services.⁴

We must prioritize the adoption of evidence-based and health-centered solutions to increase the opportunities for people struggling with substance use to seek and get treatment. This ordinance has the potential to hinder the long and established progress the City of San Francisco has developed to address the overdose crisis. We urge your “No” vote on this ordinance. For questions about our position, please contact echen@drugpolicy.org.

Respectfully,

Grey Gardner
California State Director
Drug Policy Alliance

Laura Guzman
Executive Director
National Harm Reduction Coalition

Jennifer Friedenbach
Executive Director
Coalition on Homelessness

Calder Lorenz
Director of Operations
The Gubbio Project

Celestina Pearl
Director of Outreach and Harm Reduction
Lyon Martin

Jes Distad
Vice President of Communications
Harvey Milk LGBTQ Democratic Club

⁴ City & County of San Francisco Department of Public Health. “Overdose Deaths Are Preventable: San Francisco’s Overdose Prevention Plan,” 2022. <https://www.sf.gov/sites/default/files/2022-09/SFDPH%20Overdose%20Plan%202022.pdf>.

Anne Bluethenthal
Lead Artist
ABD Productions / Skywatchers

Analise Velazquez
Advocate
Underbelly Archive Project

Lucie R.
Volunteer
Martin de Porres House

Lauren Hall
Co-Founder and Co-CEO
Delivering Innovation in Supportive Housing

Britt Creech
Operations Manager
Vanguard Lab

Ann Berg
Clinical Program Director
The Harm Reduction Therapy Center

Michael E. Armentrout
Chief Executive Officer
Maitri Compassionate Care

Larisa Pedroncelli
Chair
SF Latino Task Force Street Needs Committee

Joseph Mitchell
Peer Support Specialist
Abode Services

From: [Elle Chen](#)
To: [Board of Supervisors \(BOS\)](#); [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Cc: [Grey Gardner](#); [Norma Palacios](#); [Laura Guzman](#); [Jennifer Friedenbach](#); [Lupe Velez](#); lilla@cohsf.org
Subject: Re: Recovery First Ordinance - Opposition
Date: Wednesday, April 9, 2025 12:47:54 PM
Attachments: [Recovery First Ordinance - Letter of Opposition \(April 2025\).pdf](#)

This message is from outside the City email system. Do not open links or attachments from untrusted sources.

Good afternoon everyone,

On behalf of the Drug Policy Alliance, Coalition on Homelessness, National Harm Reduction Coalition, and our undersigned signatories, I am reaching out with an updated letter on the Recovery First Ordinance.

We extend our heartfelt appreciation to Supervisor Dorsey for meeting with our coalition and accepting the amendments below:

- Broaden treatment modalities past Medically Assisted Treatment (MAT) and
- Changing 'qualified' to 'licensed' providers

In order to withdraw our opposition, we request that the definition of 'recovery' include the [consensus and standardized definition](#) developed by the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA) (see letter for proposed language).

We appreciate the Board and staff for their continued engagement. We are devoted to working collaboratively to align SF's drug policy with national best practices and support diverse pathways to recovery.

Warm regards,

Elle C. Chen, MSc | Policy Manager
Drug Policy Alliance
Pronouns: they.them.theirs
Phone: 510.679.2309 | Email: echen@drugpolicy.org
[X](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Facebook](#)
www.drugpolicy.org

From: Elle Chen <echen@drugpolicy.org>
Sent: Thursday, March 27, 2025 12:22 PM
To: bos@sfgov.org <bos@sfgov.org>; Victor.Young@sfgov.org <Victor.Young@sfgov.org>
Cc: [Grey Gardner](mailto:ggardner@drugpolicy.org) <ggardner@drugpolicy.org>; [Norma Palacios](mailto:npalacios@drugpolicy.org) <npalacios@drugpolicy.org>; [Laura Guzman](mailto:Laura.Guzman@harmreduction.org) <guzman@harmreduction.org>; [Jennifer Friedenbach](mailto:jfriedenbach@cohsf.org) <jfriedenbach@cohsf.org>; [Lupe](mailto:Lupe.Velez@cohsf.org)

Velez <lvelez@cohsf.org>; lilla@cohsf.org <lilla@cohsf.org>

Subject: Recovery First Ordinance - Opposition

Good afternoon all,

On behalf of the Drug Policy Alliance, Coalition on Homelessness, National Harm Reduction Coalition, and our undersigned partners, we are in respectful opposition to Ordinance No. 250190, also known as the 'Recovery First Drug Policy.'

I have attached our letter which articulates our opposition to the shift in San Francisco's drug policy to singularly focus on the abstention and cessation of drug use.

We thank the Board of Supervisors and their staff for their ongoing engagement. We will continue to work diligently and collaboratively to ensure that SF's drug policy is truly health-centered, community-driven, and offers the full spectrum of the continuum of care.

Let us know if you have any additional questions about our position. Thank you!

Warm regards,

Elle C. Chen | Policy Manager

Drug Policy Alliance

Pronouns: they.them.theirs

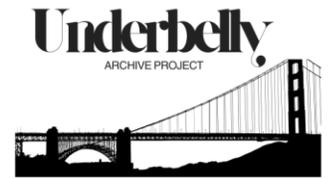
Phone: 510.679.2309 | Email: echen@drugpolicy.org

[X](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Facebook](#)

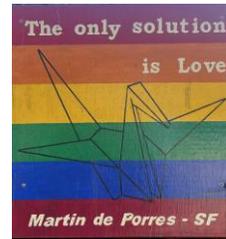
www.drugpolicy.org

**DRUG
POLICY
ALLIANCE.**

**NATIONAL
HARM REDUCTION
COALITION**



SKYWATCHERS



Maitri



Treatment on Demand
Coalition



YOUTH SERVICES

**Vilomah
FOUNDATION**

**ONE VOICE
RECOVERY**



**IN THE
WORKS**



March 20, 2025

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We sincerely thank Supervisor Matt Dorsey for meeting with our coalition and accepting amendments to broaden treatment options past Medically Assisted Treatment (MAT) as a requisite of recovery and for specifying that 'licensed' healthcare providers will administer MAT. However, **to remove our opposition**, we request that the definition of 'recovery' reference the consensus definition developed by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA).¹ The federal agency enlisted expert stakeholders to develop a recovery framework, acknowledging that the cessation of drug use is one of the many essential components of recovery.

(b) Definitions. For purposes of this Section 15.19, the following terms have the following meanings:

(1) "Recovery" [as defined by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\) means a process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live self-directed lives, and strive to reach their full potential. Recovery signals a dramatic shift in the expectation for positive outcomes for individuals who experience mental and substance use conditions or the co-occurring of the two.](#)

We share in the vision and the urgency that individuals with substance use disorders (SUD) receive the urgent treatment that they desire and need, limiting or preventing the adverse consequences associated with SUD. However, we are deeply concerned with the introduction of the Recovery First Ordinance, which, as written, signifies a drastic departure from San Francisco's long-established data-driven drug and harm reduction policies. The proposed measure presents a very narrow view of recovery, obscuring the different pathways toward recovery. **Recovery is not a one-size fits-all, rather, it exists on a spectrum.**²

¹ "SAMHSA's Working Definition of Recovery | SAMHSA Library - Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration." Accessed April 7, 2025. <https://library.samhsa.gov/product/samhsas-working-definition-recovery/pep12-recdef>.

² "Recovery and Support," February 16, 2023. <https://www.samhsa.gov/substance-use/recovery>.

Having a policy defining recovery as being “abstinent from drug use” will discourage people from seeking overdose prevention and other critical resources, knowing that any indication of their substance use could prevent access or remove them from shelter, housing or treatment. We believe that the narrow language of this ordinance could exacerbate the existing stigma against substance use disorders and substance users and thus, inhibit successful outreach and connection of people who use drugs (PWUD) to services. Alarmingly, this policy could redirect funding for abstinence-based models only, stripping harm reduction-based programs from critical funding necessary to distribute overdose prevention medication and life-saving harm reduction supplies, offer drug and treatment-related education, and facilitate connections to social services and treatment. We risk isolating individuals away from services when San Francisco should address this from both angles and incorporate harm reduction principles into treatment models to match people's experiences better.

For over thirty years, San Francisco has been at the forefront of adopting innovative strategies that reduce health risks associated with drug use and that improve the recovery of PWUD. A critical component of such measures has been the implementation of harm reduction policies and practices, driven by community public health strategies that engage directly with people who use drugs to prevent overdose and infectious disease transmission, improve physical, mental, and social well-being, and offer low-barrier options for accessing healthcare services, including substance use and mental health treatment.

In 2000, San Francisco's Health Commission passed a resolution adopting a Harm Reduction Policy for Substance Use, sexually transmitted disease, and HIV treatment and prevention services, and/or programs that serve people who use drugs in their programs.³ The adoption of this policy followed a community-led building of programming and services to support people who used drugs impacted by AIDS. It signaled San Francisco's openness to embed an evidence-based approach into their system of care and support services to meet people where they are and build trusting relationships that will connect people to health and social services. Moreover, it represented a commitment to ensure that drug policies and services to people impacted by drug use were guided by a public health approach, recognizing that cessation of all drug use is not necessary to receive supportive services. The Recovery First Ordinance will undermine a well-developed drug user health framework that maximizes the wellbeing of our communities by focusing the city's drug policy solely on one approach. The abstinence only model ignores the fact that recovery from substance use is not a linear nor rigid path and forecloses on the continuum of approaches available to support individuals in their recovery journey.

The reality is that recovery from substance use is a complex and often unpredictable process influenced by each individual's circumstances. Returning to drug use, or relapsing into substance use, is a component of the recovery change process, and for this reason it is critical to implement strategies to improve the retention of non-abstinent patients in the continuum of care. We are deeply concerned about San Francisco adopting a definition of recovery that is severely limited. This definition is not aligned with best treatment practices, but rather places abstinence-based models as the only standard for treatment when people need access to a variety of treatment

³ Harm Reduction Training Institute (HRTI). <https://www.sf.gov/information--harm-reduction-training-institute-hrti>

options beyond medication-assisted treatment, such as contingency management, behavioral health treatment, and trauma-recovery services.⁴

Investing in public health approaches will help people stay on their path towards recovery, which include but are not limited to shelter and housing options that meet their needs before and after exiting treatment; having access to low-barrier and effective treatment services, naloxone and overdose response training and education, and drug checking services. These low barrier treatment options still lack adequate funding to meet the scale of need - we must build up the spectrum of effective programs, not narrow our scope of care. San Francisco must also deliver on the promise to establish wellness hubs, a key cornerstone of the 2022 Overdose Prevention Plan to provide linkages to care, which will strengthen our current system of services.⁵

We must prioritize the adoption of evidence-based and health-centered solutions to increase the opportunities for people struggling with substance use to seek and get treatment. This ordinance has the potential to hinder the long and established progress the City of San Francisco has developed to address the overdose crisis. We urge your “No” vote on this ordinance. For questions about our position, please contact echen@drugpolicy.org.

Respectfully,

Grey Gardner
California State Director
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Executive Director
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Volunteer
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Larisa Pedroncelli
Chair
SF Latino Task Force Street Needs Committee

Lauren Hall
Co-Founder and Co-CEO

Joseph Mitchell
Peer Support Specialist

⁴ National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). “Treatment and Recovery,” July 6, 2020.

<https://nida.nih.gov/publications/drugs-brains-behavior-science-addiction/treatment-recovery>.

⁵ City & County of San Francisco Department of Public Health. “Overdose Deaths Are Preventable: San Francisco’s Overdose Prevention Plan,” 2022. <https://www.sf.gov/sites/default/files/2022-09/SFDPH%20Overdose%20Plan%202022.pdf>.

Delivering Innovation in Supportive Housing

Britt Creech
Operations Manager
Vanguard Lab

Kevin Liu
Community Organizer
Supportive Housing Overdose Prevention Network

Marnie Regen
Division Director of Government
Larkin Street Youth Services

Kenneth B Hughs
Pastor
St. Mark Institutional Missionary Baptist Church

Justice Dumlao
Community Mobilization Manager
Treatment on Demand

Susan Ousterman
Executive Director
Violomah Foundation

Patrick Rezac, SUDRC
Founder/Executive Director
One Voice Recovery, Inc.

Katia Padilla
COO Policy, Equitable and Strategic Partnerships
Latino Task Force

Kaylena Katz
Member
SFSU Public Health Organization of Graduate
Students

Laura Thomas
Senior Director of HIV and Harm Reduction Policy
San Francisco AIDS Foundation

Ry Dalporto
Volunteer
Harm Reduction Outreach Collective (HROC)

Abode Services

Mary Howe
Executive Director
Homeless Youth Alliance

Paul Boden
Director
Western Regional Advocacy Project

Eric Brooks
Campaign Coordinator
Our City San Francisco

Kathleen Cochran
Founder
Moms for All Paths

Justice Dumlao
Community Mobilization Manager
Safer Inside Coalition

Taeko Frost
Principal & Co-Founder
In the Works

Ethan Makulec
Executive Director
Humboldt Area Center for Harm Reduction
(HACHR)

Kevin Liu
Community Organizer
Rad Mission Neighbors

Joseph Wilson
Executive Director
Hospitality House

Jenn Autry
Founder
Black Heart Harm Reduction

From: [Board of Supervisors \(BOS\)](#)
To: [BOS-Supervisors](#); [BOS-Legislative Aides](#)
Cc: [BOS-Operations](#); [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#); [Calvillo, Angela \(BOS\)](#); [De Asis, Edward \(BOS\)](#); [Entezari, Mehran \(BOS\)](#); [Mchugh, Eileen \(BOS\)](#); [Ng, Wilson \(BOS\)](#); [Somera, Alisa \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: FW: Letter regarding Administrative Code – “Recovery First Drug Policy,” File No. 250190 — SUPPORT
Date: Wednesday, April 16, 2025 9:51:22 AM
Attachments: [Outlook-1504893741.png](#)
[Letter in Support of Recovery First in San Francisco.doc](#)

Hello,

Please see attached regarding **File No. 250190:**

Ordinance amending the Administrative Code to establish the cessation of illicit drug use and attainment of long-term recovery from substance use disorders as the primary objective of the City’s drug policy.

Regards,

John Bullock
Office of the Clerk of the Board
San Francisco Board of Supervisors
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Room 244
San Francisco, CA 94102
(415) 554-5184
BOS@sfgov.org | www.sfbos.org

***Disclosures:** Personal information that is provided in communications to the Board of Supervisors is subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act and the San Francisco Sunshine Ordinance. Personal information provided will not be redacted. Members of the public are not required to provide personal identifying information when they communicate with the Board of Supervisors and its committees. All written or oral communications that members of the public submit to the Clerk's Office regarding pending legislation or hearings will be made available to all members of the public for inspection and copying. The Clerk's Office does not redact any information from these submissions. This means that personal information—including names, phone numbers, addresses and similar information that a member of the public elects to submit to the Board and its committees—may appear on the Board of Supervisors website or in other public documents that members of the public may inspect or copy.*

From: Keith Humphreys <knh@stanford.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, April 15, 2025 2:25 PM
To: Board of Supervisors (BOS) <board.of.supervisors@sfgov.org>
Cc: Dorsey, Matt (BOS) <matt.dorsey@sfgov.org>
Subject: Letter regarding Administrative Code – “Recovery First Drug Policy,” File No. 250190 — SUPPORT

This message is from outside the City email system. Do not open links or attachments from untrusted sources.

Dear Board of Supervisors

Please find attached my letter supporting this policy.

Thank you
Keith Humphreys





Keith Humphreys, Ph.D.
Esther Ting Memorial Professor
401 N. Quarry Road, Room C-305 (MC:5717)
Stanford University School of Medicine
Stanford, CA 94305-5717
KNH@Stanford.edu

April 16, 2025

Board of Supervisors
City Hall
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102-4689

Re: Administrative Code – “Recovery First Drug Policy,” File No. 250190 — SUPPORT

Dear Honorable Members of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors:

As someone who has studied addiction for over 35 years, served as a drug policy advisor in multiple White Houses, and currently volunteers in the Tenderloin, I am writing in strong support of the measure introduced by Supervisor Dorsey to make recovery the primary goal of drug policy in San Francisco.

As we all know, addiction to drugs – particularly to fentanyl and methamphetamine – is doing enormous damage to San Francisco. This damage is experienced not only by those who use drugs but also by their families, their communities, local businesses, and health and social service agencies. The city is blessed with many talented, committed individuals and organizations that attempt to respond to the addiction crisis, but to date they have lacked a North Star, i.e., a clear statement of what the ultimate goal of these efforts should be and to what standard they should be held.

The “Recovery First” ordinance would provide such a North Star. It reflects compassionate optimism about the potential and dignity of every person who experiences addiction and simultaneously assures the city’s taxpayers that the resources they provide are being wisely employed.

I recognize that some have characterized aiming for recovery as a rejection of harm reduction, so please let me take a moment to say why I disagree. I support harm reduction; indeed I wrote the first White House endorsement of bringing the overdose rescue drug naloxone into communities and also helped expand funding for syringe

exchange when I worked for President Obama. At the same time I recognize that a life of continued fentanyl addiction *even if we can make it less harmful than usual* does not generate anywhere near the health and quality of life as does recovery from addiction. Harm reduction will continue under a recovery first policy as a way to address immediate needs and help addicted people survive each day, and this will be coupled with a longer-term aspiration for something more, namely a life without illicit drugs.

Just as we aim for the best possible outcome for San Franciscans who experience less stigmatized disorders like cancer and heart disease, we should also aim for full recovery for those who experience addiction. They deserve that high level of aspiration and so do all the San Franciscans who are suffering along with them.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Keith Hayley". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

From: [Ellen Grantz](#)
To: [Calvillo, Angela \(BOS\)](#); [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#); [Board of Supervisors \(BOS\)](#); [BOS-Legislative Aides](#); [BOS-Supervisors](#)
Cc: [Lurie, Daniel \(MYR\)](#); [Jacqui Berlin](#); [Gina McDonald](#); [Tanya Tilghman](#)
Subject: MADAAD's Support for San Francisco's Recovery-First Ordinance (File No. 250190)
Date: Thursday, April 17, 2025 11:39:37 AM
Attachments: [MADAAD Letter in support of Recovery First ordinance file 250190 4-17-2025.pdf](#)

This message is from outside the City email system. Do not open links or attachments from untrusted sources.

Dear Honorable Members of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors:

We, the members of Mothers Against Drug Addiction & Deaths (MADAAD), write to express our strong support for the “Recovery First” ordinance introduced by Supervisor Matt Dorsey and co-sponsored by Board President Rafael Mandelman and Supervisors Bilal Mahmood, Stephen Sherrill, Myrna Melgar, Joel Engardio and Danny Sauter, that establishes the cessation of illicit drug use and the attainment of long-term recovery as the **primary goal** of San Francisco’s response to the overdose crisis. As an organization of mothers who have witnessed the devastating toll of addiction on our children, our families, and our communities, we believe this policy offers the clarity and hope needed to save lives and help individuals reclaim their futures.

MADAAD was founded to fight for the lives of those struggling from addiction, drawing on the shared experiences of mothers who have searched for their children on the streets, mourned their losses, and advocated for systemic change. We have seen firsthand how drugs like fentanyl and methamphetamine fuel cycles of addiction and homelessness, tearing families apart. Our mission is to prevent more communities from enduring this pain by promoting policies that prioritize recovery and provide a clear path to a life free from drug addiction.

We understand the concerns some may have about a recovery-first approach. There’s a fear that prioritizing abstinence from illicit drugs might oversimplify the complex, often non-linear nature of recovery. As mothers who have watched our loved ones struggle—and, in too many cases, lose their lives to addiction—we know recovery isn’t always a straight path. Setbacks are real, and each person’s journey is unique. The “Recovery First” ordinance recognizes this by embracing multiple pathways, including Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) when prescribed by licensed professionals, while keeping recovery from addiction as the ultimate goal. We believe that setting this clear target and allowing for multiple pathways to reach it will provide the focus and structure needed for lasting change, offering hope to those trapped in addiction’s grip.

Another concern is that a recovery-focused policy might increase stigma, discouraging people from seeking help. At MADAAD, we’ve lived the pain of watching our children battle shame and isolation—we know how stigma can keep them from reaching out. Far from being discouraging, the “Recovery First” ordinance embraces

effective harm reduction services as vital entry points to care, ensuring no one is turned away. Having recovery as a goal isn't about judgment; it's about honoring the potential of those we love to heal and rebuild their lives, giving them a future beyond the perpetual management of their addiction. At the same time, we must affirm that cessation of illicit drugs is our health policy because it is essential for long-term wellbeing.

San Francisco's overdose crisis demands a bold new approach. The rise of deadly synthetic drugs like fentanyl and methamphetamine has shattered families, with 3,900 people in San Francisco lost to overdoses since 2019. The "Recovery First" ordinance will provide the direction our overdose response needs without sacrificing the best elements of our current system.

We urge the Board of Supervisors to adopt the "Recovery First" ordinance that prioritizes recovery as the primary goal of our city's drug response. The stories of MADAAD's kids—stories of loss, struggle, and determination—underscore the urgent need for a system that offers hope to every person fighting this battle. Let's build a future where no child has to wonder if a life of addiction is the best they can ever hope for.

In solidarity:

Jacqui Berlinn, Bay Area mother of Corey, an unsheltered resident in San Francisco
Gina McDonald, Bay Area mother of a Sam, in recovery after surviving on the streets of SF

Tanya Tilghman, SF mother of Roman, currently incarcerated in SF after relapsing
Ellen Grantz, San Francisco mother of two teenagers in San Francisco public schools

MOTHERS AGAINST DRUG ADDICTION & DEATHS

San Francisco Board of Supervisors
City Hall
1 Dr Carlton B Goodlett Pl
San Francisco, CA 94102

April 17, 2025

Subject: MADAAD's Support for San Francisco's Recovery-First Ordinance (File No. 250190)

Dear Honorable Members of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors:

We, the members of Mothers Against Drug Addiction & Deaths (MADAAD), write to express our strong support for the "Recovery First" ordinance introduced by Supervisor Matt Dorsey and co-sponsored by Board President Rafael Mandelman and Supervisors Bilal Mahmood, Stephen Sherrill, Myrna Melgar, Joel Engardio and Danny Sauter, that establishes the cessation of illicit drug use and the attainment of long-term recovery as the **primary goal** of San Francisco's response to the overdose crisis. As an organization of mothers who have witnessed the devastating toll of addiction on our children, our families, and our communities, we believe this policy offers the clarity and hope needed to save lives and help individuals reclaim their futures.

MADAAD was founded to fight for the lives of those struggling from addiction, drawing on the shared experiences of mothers who have searched for their children on the streets, mourned their losses, and advocated for systemic change. We have seen firsthand how drugs like fentanyl and methamphetamine fuel cycles of addiction and homelessness, tearing families apart. Our mission is to prevent more communities from enduring this pain by promoting policies that prioritize recovery and provide a clear path to a life free from drug addiction.

We understand the concerns some may have about a recovery-first approach. There's a fear that prioritizing abstinence from illicit drugs might oversimplify the complex, often non-linear nature of recovery. As mothers who have watched our loved ones struggle—and, in too many cases, lose their lives to addiction—we know recovery isn't always a straight path. Setbacks are real, and each person's journey is unique. The "Recovery First" ordinance recognizes this by embracing multiple pathways, including Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) when prescribed by licensed professionals, while keeping recovery from addiction as the ultimate goal. We

believe that setting this clear target and allowing for multiple pathways to reach it will provide the focus and structure needed for lasting change, offering hope to those trapped in addiction's grip.

Another concern is that a recovery-focused policy might increase stigma, discouraging people from seeking help. At MADAAD, we've lived the pain of watching our children battle shame and isolation—we know how stigma can keep them from reaching out. Far from being discouraging, the "Recovery First" ordinance embraces effective harm reduction services as vital entry points to care, ensuring no one is turned away. Having recovery as a goal isn't about judgment; it's about honoring the potential of those we love to heal and rebuild their lives, giving them a future beyond the perpetual management of their addiction. At the same time, we must affirm that cessation of illicit drugs is our health policy because it is essential for long-term wellbeing.

San Francisco's overdose crisis demands a bold new approach. The rise of deadly synthetic drugs like fentanyl and methamphetamine has shattered families, with 3,900 people in San Francisco lost to overdoses since 2019. The "Recovery First" ordinance will provide the direction our overdose response needs without sacrificing the best elements of our current system.

We urge the Board of Supervisors to adopt the "Recovery First" ordinance that prioritizes recovery as the primary goal of our city's drug response. The stories of MADAAD's kids—stories of loss, struggle, and determination—underscore the urgent need for a system that offers hope to every person fighting this battle. Let's build a future where no child has to wonder if a life of addiction is the best they can ever hope for.

In solidarity:

Jacqui Berlinn, Bay Area mother of Corey, an unsheltered resident in San Francisco
Gina McDonald, Bay Area mother of a Sam, in recovery after surviving on the streets of SF
Tanya Tilghman, SF mother of Roman, currently incarcerated in SF after relapsing
Ellen Grantz, San Francisco mother of two teenagers in San Francisco public schools

From: [Charlton Yu](#)
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Support Supervisor Dorsey's Recovery First Ordinance
Date: Friday, April 18, 2025 8:51:31 AM

This message is from outside the City email system. Do not open links or attachments from untrusted sources.

Clerk Monique Crayton,

I'm writing to express my support for Supervisor Dorsey's "Recovery First" ordinance which calls for the cessation of illicit drug use to be the primary goal of our public health policy for people struggling with addiction.

For too long San Francisco has failed to prioritize long-term recovery for people who are struggling with addiction. Instead, our City has acted as if the best we can do is give drug users clean supplies and Narcan, while we look the other way and hope they don't die.

Supervisor Dorsey's legislation is pragmatic. By calling for the cessation of illicit drug use as the "north star" for our public health policy, it will align our health policy with virtually every other public health system in the world. His policy is also progressive, embracing treatments like prescription medicines such as Methadone and Suboxone, as well as harm reduction, as part of the continuum of care.

Without Supervisor Dorsey's "Recovery First" ordinance, our public health policy is deeply flawed, suggesting that people should not expect to recover, despite mountains of evidence that people can overcome addiction to illicit drugs. At a time when synthetic drugs are flooding our City, our policy of tolerating illicit drugs sends a dangerous message to our children.

I urge you to support the "Recovery First" ordinance. This approach isn't about choosing between compassion and accountability; it's about a common sense reform that's long overdue.

Sincerely,

Charlton Yu
charlton_yu@yahoo.com

San Francisco, California 94118

From: [Lily Ho](#)
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Support Supervisor Dorsey's Recovery First Ordinance
Date: Sunday, April 20, 2025 11:21:37 PM

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Sincerely,

Lily Ho
lily.ho@gmail.com

San Francisco, California 94115

From: [amy chiu](#)
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Support Supervisor Dorsey's Recovery First Ordinance
Date: Sunday, April 20, 2025 10:14:35 PM

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Sincerely,

amy chiu
amy.s.chiu@gmail.com

San Francisco, California 94107

From: [Lanier Coles](#)
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Support Supervisor Dorsey's Recovery First Ordinance
Date: Sunday, April 20, 2025 9:01:49 PM

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Sincerely,

Lanier Coles
lanier@sfdems.org

San Francisco, California 94118

From: [Jacqui Berlinn](#)
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Support Supervisor Dorsey's Recovery First Ordinance
Date: Sunday, April 20, 2025 3:36:52 PM

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Sincerely,

Jacqui Berlinn
jacqui@madaad.org

Oakland, California 94612

From: [Ellen Grantz](#)
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Support Supervisor Dorsey's Recovery First Ordinance
Date: Sunday, April 20, 2025 2:46:37 PM

This message is from outside the City email system. Do not open links or attachments from untrusted sources.

Clerk Monique Crayton,

I'm writing to express my support for Supervisor Dorsey's "Recovery First" ordinance which calls for the cessation of illicit drug use to be the primary goal of our public health policy for people struggling with addiction.

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Sincerely,

Ellen Grantz
ellen@madaad.org

San Francisco, California 94117

From: [Margaux Kelly](#)
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Support Supervisor Dorsey's Recovery First Ordinance
Date: Sunday, April 20, 2025 7:49:41 AM

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Sincerely,

Margaux Kelly
Margaux.kelly@gmail.com

San Francisco, California 94122

From: [Susan Fisch](#)
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Support Supervisor Dorsey's Recovery First Ordinance
Date: Saturday, April 19, 2025 11:42:20 AM

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Clerk Monique Crayton,

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Sincerely,

Susan Fisch
sfisch116@comcast.net

San Francisco, California 94117

From: [Robert Aiavao](#)
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Support Supervisor Dorsey's Recovery First Ordinance
Date: Saturday, April 19, 2025 10:07:30 AM

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Sincerely,

Robert Aiavao
raiavao@gmail.com
1241 41st Avenue
San Francisco, California 94122

From: [Srinivasan Vijayaraghavan](#)
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Support Supervisor Dorsey's Recovery First Ordinance
Date: Friday, April 18, 2025 7:10:30 PM

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I urge you to support the "Recovery First" ordinance. This approach isn't about choosing between compassion and accountability; it's about a common sense reform that's long overdue.

Sincerely,

Srinivasan Vijayaraghavan
srinivasanv93@gmail.com

San Francisco, California 94122

From: [Doug Chan](#)
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Support Supervisor Dorsey's Recovery First Ordinance
Date: Friday, April 18, 2025 6:54:27 PM

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Sincerely,

Doug Chan
dchanlaw@gmail.com

San Francisco, California 94121

From: [Julien DeFrance](#)
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Support Supervisor Dorsey's Recovery First Ordinance
Date: Friday, April 18, 2025 6:38:47 PM

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Sincerely,

Julien DeFrance
julien.defrance@gmail.com

San Francisco, California 94109

From: [Rutledge Yu](#)
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Support Supervisor Dorsey's Recovery First Ordinance
Date: Monday, April 21, 2025 9:47:39 AM

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Sincerely,

Rutledge Yu
rutledgeyu@icloud.com

San Francisco, California 94118

From: [Adele Yu](#)
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Support Supervisor Dorsey's Recovery First Ordinance
Date: Monday, April 21, 2025 9:56:02 AM

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Sincerely,

Adele Yu
adelecolesyu@icloud.com

San Francisco, California 94118

To the Honorable Members of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors

As a retired physician anesthesiologist who administered fentanyl daily under tightly controlled medical conditions, I write to express my strong support for Supervisor Matt Dorsey's "Recovery First" ordinance (File No. 250190). My perspective is shaped not only by my professional experience but also by painful personal truths: I am the son of a mother who suffered from mental illness and prescription drug abuse and died by suicide. I am the father of a son who endured a ten-year struggle with benzodiazepine addiction but with a better outcome. And now, I am a resident of San Francisco's downtown Yerba Buena District, where I witness daily the humanitarian and civic toll of unchecked substance use.

In addition to my medical background, I serve on the Board of Directors of our Condominium Association and on The Board of the Yerba Buena Community Benefit District (Yerba Buena Partnership). From both positions, I see how the ongoing public health and safety crisis directly impacts residents, businesses, and visitors alike.

I respect the harm reduction community's contributions over the last decades. However, the reality on our streets today tells us this model—on its own—has not delivered the compassionate outcomes it intended. Supervisor Dorsey's Recovery First ordinance is not a rejection of harm reduction; it is a course correction that places long-term recovery and public health—not mere survival—as our shared goal. That is the most compassionate approach of all.

Critics argue that emphasizing abstinence increases stigma or limits care options. But this ordinance does not remove harm reduction—it reframes it within a broader, hopeful framework that reaffirms recovery as the goal. Recovery is not linear, but we still need to define the path forward. A policy without direction leaves people stranded in cycles of addiction. That is neither humane nor just.

While I agree with Supervisor Dorsey's definition of recovery as the cessation of illicit drug use, I believe it is essential to emphasize that this definition should serve not as a rigid barrier but as an aspirational goal—one that affirms

the dignity and potential of every person struggling with addiction, while also restoring public trust that San Francisco stands for both compassion and accountability.

Much has been said about San Francisco's leadership in drug policy, but what is truly progressive now is to acknowledge when a strategy is no longer working and course correct. Oregon's experiment with decriminalization was intended as a bold step, but it has proven deeply flawed. Overdose deaths rose, public spaces deteriorated, and treatment engagement was minimal. The absence of accountability and incentives led to more suffering—not less. We should learn from that outcome, not repeat it.

Our current system in San Francisco—overly permissive, lacking consequences—has made our city a magnet for dealers and drug users while disempowering residents who simply want to live in dignity and safety. As John Chachas, CEO of Gump's, stated in 2023, "San Francisco now suffers from a 'tyranny of the minority'—behavior and actions of the few that jeopardize the livelihood of the many." I see this daily, not only as a physician and father, but as a local leader and neighbor.

Supervisor Dorsey's ordinance reflects the values and mission that Mayor Daniel Lurie has set forth: a safer, healthier San Francisco where public health and personal accountability work hand in hand. The inclusion of licensed providers and Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) ensures this ordinance is modern, data-informed, and deeply humane.

Recovery is possible. I've seen it. But we must create conditions that make it probable—through clarity, structure, and compassion. I fully support this legislation and commit myself, both professionally and personally, to be part of the solution.

With gratitude and conviction,

Laurence Brett Wiener, MD

Retired Anesthesiologist

Resident, Yerba Buena District, San Francisco

From: [Amanda Hoenigman](#)
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Support Supervisor Dorsey's Recovery First Ordinance
Date: Monday, April 21, 2025 6:03:30 PM

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Clerk Monique Crayton,

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Sincerely,

Amanda Hoenigman
amanda@hoenigman.com

San Francisco, California 94123

From: [Julie Purnell](#)
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Support Supervisor Dorsey's Recovery First Ordinance
Date: Monday, April 21, 2025 8:53:04 PM

This message is from outside the City email system. Do not open links or attachments from untrusted sources.

Clerk Monique Crayton,

I'm writing to express my support for Supervisor Dorsey's "Recovery First" ordinance which calls for the cessation of illicit drug use to be the primary goal of our public health policy for people struggling with addiction.

For too long San Francisco has failed to prioritize long-term recovery for people who are struggling with addiction. Instead, our City has acted as if the best we can do is give drug users clean supplies and Narcan, while we look the other way and hope they don't die.

Supervisor Dorsey's legislation is pragmatic. By calling for the cessation of illicit drug use as the "north star" for our public health policy, it will align our health policy with virtually every other public health system in the world. His policy is also progressive, embracing treatments like prescription medicines such as Methadone and Suboxone, as well as harm reduction, as part of the continuum of care.

Without Supervisor Dorsey's "Recovery First" ordinance, our public health policy is deeply flawed, suggesting that people should not expect to recover, despite mountains of evidence that people can overcome addiction to illicit drugs. At a time when synthetic drugs are flooding our City, our policy of tolerating illicit drugs sends a dangerous message to our children.

I urge you to support the "Recovery First" ordinance. This approach isn't about choosing between compassion and accountability; it's about a common sense reform that's long overdue.

Sincerely,

Julie Purnell
juliehpurnell@gmail.com

San Francisco, California 94118

Good morning Supervisors,

My name is Shiba. I am a D4 resident and a member of the Treatment on Demand Coalition and Safer Inside coalition.

I am here to strongly urge you all to implement recommendations brought forth by community advocates and experts, people with lived experiences and CBOs currently working to curb accidental fatal overdose deaths.

San Francisco's continuum of care under Proposition T is an existing drug policy intervention that should be prioritized, expanded and implemented to meet the needs of people who use drugs and those struggling with several mental health.

The Treatment on Demand initiative is yet to be fulfilled; meaning this proposed ordinance aims to achieve very little for people who use drugs at a point in time when our city is seeing 2 people dying of a preventable drug overdose per day.

According to [SAMHSA](#), the working definition of recovery is "*a process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live a self-directed life, and strive to reach their full potential.*" By expanding the definition of recovery, we can reach more people, leading with behavioral health services tailored to the individual seeking treatment and recovery.

This Recovery First legislation fails to recognize that the pathway to abstinence is first and foremost, a personal decision not one dictated by elected officials or city government. Recovery is truly about connections to care—connections to resources, to services, to housing, to treatment, to trauma treatment, to community, and ultimately, to life itself.

San Francisco has many programs currently working well to meet people in a low threshold and low barrier capacity, but our overall treatment access system has yet to meet the growing need and demand.

We need data driven strategies and evidence-based research to expand critical resources for people who use drugs.

We know that all roads to recovery are neither linear or binary, and our efforts as a city should elevate public health interventions that tend to the whole person, not just their challenges in regards to behavioral health.

As a city, we lack the most basic infrastructure to move people indoors, into safe places for respite, detox and treatment. Oftentimes, we have several city departments touching point to the same individual multiple times without a referral to treatment or exists from the streets.

We need to do better in coordinating wraparound support services for all who struggle with several mental health, substance use disorders and homelessness. Unfortunately, this ordinance doesn't provide us with a pathway forward, but if it is to be implemented, it should follow the science and include recommendations for those impacted the most.

Thank you!

Sincerely,
Shiba Bandeeba

From: [Alexandra Baum](#)
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Support Supervisor Dorsey's Recovery First Ordinance
Date: Tuesday, April 22, 2025 6:33:03 PM

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Clerk Monique Crayton,

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I urge you to support the "Recovery First" ordinance. This approach isn't about choosing between compassion and accountability; it's about a common sense reform that's long overdue.

Sincerely,

Alexandra Baum
alexandrabaum93@gmail.com

San Francisco, California 94123

From: [Michael Siracusa](#)
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Support Supervisor Dorsey's Recovery First Ordinance
Date: Tuesday, April 22, 2025 7:49:31 PM

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Sincerely,

Michael Siracusa
Michael.o.siracusa@gmail.com

San Francisco, California 94108

From: [Peter Tham](#)
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Support Supervisor Dorsey's Recovery First Ordinance
Date: Tuesday, April 22, 2025 7:52:50 PM

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Sincerely,

Peter Tham
peterctham@gmail.com

San Francisco, California 94112

From: [Patricia Stanton](#)
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Support Supervisor Dorsey's Recovery First Ordinance
Date: Tuesday, April 22, 2025 7:54:29 PM

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Sincerely,

Patricia Stanton
pstanton1224@gmail.com

San Francisco, California 94118

From: [Peter Lee](#)
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Support Supervisor Dorsey's Recovery First Ordinance
Date: Tuesday, April 22, 2025 7:56:06 PM

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Sincerely,

Peter Lee
peterlee100@yahoo.com

San Francisco, California 94107

From: [Paulina Fayer](#)
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Support Supervisor Dorsey's Recovery First Ordinance
Date: Tuesday, April 22, 2025 7:56:22 PM

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Sincerely,

Paulina Fayer
plfayer@gmail.com

San Francisco, California 94131

From: [Bich Loc](#)
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Support Supervisor Dorsey's Recovery First Ordinance
Date: Tuesday, April 22, 2025 7:58:03 PM

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Sincerely,

Bich Loc
selinaloc@gmail.com

San Francisco, California 94112

From: [Olga Zubashko](#)
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Support Supervisor Dorsey's Recovery First Ordinance
Date: Tuesday, April 22, 2025 7:58:24 PM

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Sincerely,

Olga Zubashko
olga.zubshko@gmail.com

San Francisco, California 94114

From: [Gabriella Makstman](#)
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Support Supervisor Dorsey's Recovery First Ordinance
Date: Tuesday, April 22, 2025 8:58:19 PM

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Sincerely,

Gabriella Makstman
gabriellamakstman@gmail.com

Daly City, California 94014

From: [Leilani Mason](#)
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Support Supervisor Dorsey's Recovery First Ordinance
Date: Tuesday, April 22, 2025 9:02:17 PM

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Sincerely,

Leilani Mason
leilani@southsidesf.com

San Francisco, California 94158

From: flotemer@gmail.com
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Support Supervisor Dorsey's Recovery First Ordinance
Date: Tuesday, April 22, 2025 9:52:25 PM

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Sincerely,

flotemer@gmail.com

,

From: thomas@thomasmade.com
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Support Supervisor Dorsey's Recovery First Ordinance
Date: Wednesday, April 23, 2025 12:17:04 AM

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Sincerely,

thomas@thomasmade.com

,

From: [Jennifer Jeffries](#)
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Support Supervisor Dorsey's Recovery First Ordinance
Date: Wednesday, April 23, 2025 6:21:04 AM

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Sincerely,

Jennifer Jeffries
jennifer.jeffries29@gmail.com

San Francisco, California 94115

From: [Scotty Jacobs](#)
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Support Supervisor Dorsey's Recovery First Ordinance
Date: Wednesday, April 23, 2025 6:44:15 AM

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Sincerely,

Scotty Jacobs
scotty@scottyjacobs.com

San Francisco, California 94117

From: [Donna Dea](#)
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Support Supervisor Dorsey's Recovery First Ordinance
Date: Wednesday, April 23, 2025 8:53:18 AM

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Sincerely,

Donna Dea
donna.dea@sbcglobal.net

San Francisco, California 94109-3583

From: [Colette Hernandez](#)
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Support Supervisor Dorsey's Recovery First Ordinance
Date: Wednesday, April 23, 2025 10:28:29 AM

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Sincerely,

Colette Hernandez
colette.hernandez10@gmail.com

San Francisco, California 94122

From: [Gina Boggio](#)
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Support Supervisor Dorsey's Recovery First Ordinance
Date: Wednesday, April 23, 2025 10:32:49 AM

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Gina Boggio
ginalboggio@gmail.com

San Francisco, California 94107

From: [Christel Hellenbroich](#)
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Support Supervisor Dorsey's Recovery First Ordinance
Date: Wednesday, April 23, 2025 10:47:58 AM

This message is from outside the City email system. Do not open links or attachments from untrusted sources.

Clerk Monique Crayton,

I'm writing to express my support for Supervisor Dorsey's "Recovery First" ordinance which calls for the cessation of illicit drug use to be the primary goal of our public health policy for people struggling with addiction.

For too long San Francisco has failed to prioritize long-term recovery for people who are struggling with addiction. Instead, our City has acted as if the best we can do is give drug users clean supplies and Narcan, while we look the other way and hope they don't die.

Supervisor Dorsey's legislation is pragmatic. By calling for the cessation of illicit drug use as the "north star" for our public health policy, it will align our health policy with virtually every other public health system in the world. His policy is also progressive, embracing treatments like prescription medicines such as Methadone and Suboxone, as well as harm reduction, as part of the continuum of care.

Without Supervisor Dorsey's "Recovery First" ordinance, our public health policy is deeply flawed, suggesting that people should not expect to recover, despite mountains of evidence that people can overcome addiction to illicit drugs. At a time when synthetic drugs are flooding our City, our policy of tolerating illicit drugs sends a dangerous message to our children.

I urge you to support the "Recovery First" ordinance. This approach isn't about choosing between compassion and accountability; it's about a common sense reform that's long overdue.

Sincerely,

Christel Hellenbroich
christel.hl84@gmail.com

San Francisco, California 94158

From: [Karina Gertsikov](#)
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Support Supervisor Dorsey's Recovery First Ordinance
Date: Wednesday, April 23, 2025 1:55:00 PM

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I urge you to support the "Recovery First" ordinance. This approach isn't about choosing between compassion and accountability; it's about a common sense reform that's long overdue.

Sincerely,

Karina Gertsikov
karinasf5@icloud.com

Burlingame, California 94010

From: [Elizabeth Clark](#)
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Support Supervisor Dorsey's Recovery First Ordinance
Date: Wednesday, April 23, 2025 3:02:03 PM

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Sincerely,

Elizabeth Clark
swimeclark@gmail.com

San Francisco, California 94118

From: ericmkingsbury@gmail.com
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Support Supervisor Dorsey's Recovery First Ordinance
Date: Wednesday, April 23, 2025 3:57:21 PM

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Sincerely,

ericmkingsbury@gmail.com

,

From: [Michael Lai](#)
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Support Supervisor Dorsey's Recovery First Ordinance
Date: Wednesday, April 23, 2025 4:52:55 PM

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Sincerely,

Michael Lai
michaeltclai@gmail.com

San Francisco, California 94112

From: [Carrie Barnes](#)
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Support Supervisor Dorsey's Recovery First Ordinance
Date: Wednesday, April 23, 2025 5:26:19 PM

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Sincerely,

Carrie Barnes
carriebarnes@me.com

San Francisco, California 94118

From: [Alexandra Novakovich](#)
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Support Supervisor Dorsey's Recovery First Ordinance
Date: Wednesday, April 23, 2025 5:41:22 PM

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Sincerely,

Alexandra Novakovich
annovakovich@gmail.com

San Francisco, California 94115

From: [Jeff Webb](#)
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Support Supervisor Dorsey's Recovery First Ordinance
Date: Wednesday, April 23, 2025 6:02:54 PM

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Sincerely,

Jeff Webb
auweia1@gmail.com

San Francisco, California 94103

From: [Marianne Oest](#)
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Support Supervisor Dorsey's Recovery First Ordinance
Date: Wednesday, April 23, 2025 6:31:27 PM

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Sincerely,

Marianne Oest
marianne_oest@yahoo.com

San Francisco, California 94109

From: kendalljennings226@yahoo.com
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Support Supervisor Dorsey's Recovery First Ordinance
Date: Wednesday, April 23, 2025 7:05:50 PM

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Sincerely,

kendalljennings226@yahoo.com

,

From: [Renee Hamilton](#)
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Support Supervisor Dorsey's Recovery First Ordinance
Date: Wednesday, April 23, 2025 7:06:14 PM

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Sincerely,

Renee Hamilton
l.renee.hamilton@gmail.com

San Francisco, California 94102

From: [Karinna Sulca](#)
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Support Supervisor Dorsey's Recovery First Ordinance
Date: Wednesday, April 23, 2025 8:52:31 PM

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Sincerely,

Karinna Sulca
2058hair@gmail.com

, 94103

From: [Evan Rich](#)
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Support Supervisor Dorsey's Recovery First Ordinance
Date: Wednesday, April 23, 2025 9:14:44 PM

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Sincerely,

Evan Rich
evan@richtablesf.com

San Francisco, California 94102

From: [Teresina Goheen](#)
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Support Supervisor Dorsey's Recovery First Ordinance
Date: Thursday, April 24, 2025 10:46:45 PM

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Sincerely,

Teresina Goheen
teresinamg@gmail.com

San Francisco, California 94118

From: [andrew wickens](#)
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Support Supervisor Dorsey's Recovery First Ordinance
Date: Thursday, April 24, 2025 4:48:17 PM

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Sincerely,

andrew wickens
wickens1@gmail.com

San Francisco, California 94103

From: [Jack Ryder](#)
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Support Supervisor Dorsey's Recovery First Ordinance
Date: Thursday, April 24, 2025 6:15:00 PM

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Sincerely,

Jack Ryder
jackdryder@gmail.com

San Francisco, California 94109

From: [Nicole Murray](#)
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Support Supervisor Dorsey's Recovery First Ordinance
Date: Thursday, April 24, 2025 10:18:59 PM

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Clerk Monique Crayton,

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Sincerely,

Nicole Murray
nmurray@murrays.org

San Francisco, California 94123

From: [Ellen Grantz](#)
To: [Calvillo, Angela \(BOS\)](#); [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#); [Board of Supervisors \(BOS\)](#); [BOS-Legislative Aides](#); [BOS-Supervisors](#)
Cc: [Lurie, Daniel \(MYR\)](#); [Jacqui Berlinn](#); [Gina McDonald](#); [Tanya Tilghman](#)
Subject: MADAAD REJECTS Amended Recovery First Ordinance (File No. 250190)
Date: Monday, April 28, 2025 2:02:26 PM
Attachments: [MADAAD Letter rescinding support for Recovery First ordinance 4-28-2025.pdf](#)

This message is from outside the City email system. Do not open links or attachments from untrusted sources.

Dear Honorable Members of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors:

As members of Mothers Against Drug Addiction & Deaths (MADAAD), we regretfully WITHDRAW SUPPORT for the amended "Recovery First" ordinance. The recent changes have fundamentally altered the legislation from a solution to a continuation of failed policies that have devastated those struggling with addiction in our City and indelibly tarnished San Francisco's image.

The amended Recovery First ordinance is not what San Francisco is calling for—it is out of step with Mayor Lurie's Fentanyl Emergency Ordinance and voter demands for greater accountability in addressing homelessness and addiction. Furthermore, the revised definition of "recovery" programs to include those that don't necessarily strive for cessation of illicit drug use, is inconsistent with established guidelines from SAMHSA and NIDA, and goes against the recommendations of Dr. Keith Humphreys who supported the original ordinance.

We urge you to reject or amend the ordinance again as per our letter attached.

Thank you for your courageous leadership shaping San Francisco's drug policy. The world is watching and mothers everywhere are counting on you.

Sincerely and with gratitude,

Jacqui Berlinn, Bay Area mother of Corey, an unsheltered resident in San Francisco
Gina McDonald, Bay Area mother of a Sam, in recovery after surviving on the streets of SF

Tanya Tilghman, SF mother of Roman, currently incarcerated in SF after relapsing
Ellen Grantz, San Francisco mother of teenagers

MOTHERS AGAINST DRUG ADDICTION & DEATHS

"Fighting for the Lives of Those Struggling with Addiction"

April 28, 2025

San Francisco Board of Supervisors
City Hall, 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Pl
San Francisco, CA 94102

Subject: MADAAD STRONGLY REJECTS Amended Recovery First Ordinance (File No. 250190)

Dear Honorable Members of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors:

As members of Mothers Against Drug Addiction & Deaths (MADAAD), we regretfully WITHDRAW SUPPORT for the amended "Recovery First" ordinance. The recent changes have fundamentally altered the legislation from a solution to a continuation of failed policies that have devastated those struggling with addiction in our City and indelibly tarnished San Francisco's image.

Supervisor Dorsey's original proposal was visionary—establishing the cessation of illicit drug use as the clear, unmistakable goal of San Francisco's drug policy and programs that it funds. The amended version, however, now permits unlimited, open-ended interpretations of what constitutes a "recovery" program.

Our central objection focuses on a single critical provision: By including "or other program determined by the program participant" to the recovery options eligible for City support, the amended ordinance creates a boundary-free definition that could justify virtually any approach. (See highlighted text below.) Notably, the revised language also eliminates "cessation of illicit drug use" as the objective of City-funded recovery programs, thereby implying that "other programs" that the City might fund in the name of "recovery" may well be those that enable illicit drug use in perpetuity.

(42) "Recovery" means the process by which an individual suffering from Substance Use Disorder strives to make positive changes that become part of a voluntarily adopted healthy lifestyle. Recovery abstinence from illicit drugs, and shall may include participation in; a Medication-Assisted-Treatment program administered by a qualified licensed healthcare provider in accordance with applicable laws and medical guidance; an outpatient or residential substance use treatment program; a contingency management program; or other program determined by the program participant to support their efforts to be in Remission.

Voters would be wise to be wary of how our department of public health might interpret such open-ended language. Within the past few years, San Francisco's Department of Public Health has selected and funded with taxpayer dollars, programs so radical that they've been criticised around the world for perpetuating instead of treating drug addiction. A few recent examples:

MOTHERS AGAINST DRUG ADDICTION & DEATHS

- In March 2020, the DPH-funded ad campaign called "Know Overdose: Do It With Friends" was so outrageous that it drew scathing criticism nationally even from progressive commentators ("Real Time with Bill Maher" and NYT opinion writer Ezra Klein) for effectively *encouraging* use of deadly fentanyl, ultimately forcing former Supervisor Stefani to demand the removal of these billboards.
- While it was open in January-December 2022, the DPH's Tenderloin Linkage Site was repeatedly the subject of international media scorn for illegally permitting illicit drug use inside, and tolerating abject suffering of people struggling from addiction on its doorstep, in spite of its lavish \$24 million budget; photographs of people with needles hanging from their limbs, slumped over wheelchairs in broad daylight in front of the site, where less than 1% of participants were ever admitted to any substance use disorder treatment, will long haunt our city.
- The DPH-funded distribution of foil and pipes has been on broad public display, profiled in this month (April, 2025) in the New York Times article, "[San Francisco Rethinks Drug Paraphernalia Handouts](#)," further illustrating our city's extreme policies of enabling rather than treating addiction as a public health policy.

The amended Recovery First ordinance is not what San Francisco is calling for—it is out of step with Mayor Lurie's Fentanyl Emergency Ordinance and voter demands for greater accountability in addressing homelessness and addiction. Furthermore, the revised definition of "recovery" programs to include those that don't necessarily strive for cessation of illicit drug use, is inconsistent with established guidelines from SAMHSA and NIDA, and goes against the recommendations of Dr. Keith Humphreys who supported the original ordinance.

At this pivotal moment in San Francisco's approach to the drug crisis, when the nation and countless people in recovery are watching, our City must demonstrate courage to stand for the true meaning of recovery, in which cessation from illicit drug use is the unambiguous goal.

Therefore, we strongly urge the Board to REJECT this amended ordinance or REVISE it to eliminate the provision highlighted above, restoring Supervisor Dorsey's original vision—a policy that finally prioritizes genuine recovery from illicit drug use as San Francisco's guiding principle.

With concern and determination,

Jacqui Berlinn

Bay Area mother of Corey, an unsheltered resident in San Francisco

Gina McDonald

Bay Area mother of Sam, in recovery after surviving on the streets of SF

Tanya Tilghman

SF mother of Roman, currently incarcerated in SF after relapsing

Ellen Grantz

San Francisco mother of two teenagers in San Francisco public schools

From: [Paul Aguilar](#)
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Public Safety Committee Agenda Item 2 April 24, 2025
Date: Thursday, April 24, 2025 12:00:05 PM

This message is from outside the City email system. Do not open links or attachments from untrusted sources.

Dear Monique,

Please include the following statement in reference to today's Public Safety Committee Meeting:

Item 2 250190 [Administrative Code - Recovery First Drug Policy]

Honorable Members of the Board of Supervisors,

My name is Paul Aguilar. I reside in District 9 and serve at the San Francisco AIDS Foundation. I offer this testimony drawing upon considerable experience within our city's public health landscape, including chairing the HIV Caucus of the Harvey Milk LGBTQ Democratic Club, co-authoring the San Francisco Principles 2020 – unanimously adopted by this Board in 2022 – and participating in the foundational implementation of San Francisco's pioneering SACPA (Proposition 36) initiative back in 2000. As a fourth-generation San Franciscan and someone who has personally navigated the path of recovery for over three decades, I feel a deep responsibility to address the proposed "Recovery First" ordinance.

While the urgency of addressing the devastating fentanyl crisis impacting our most vulnerable communities is undeniable, this proposed ordinance represents a concerning departure from strategies proven effective across Canada and many European countries. It risks undermining decades of progress built on evidence-based public health principles.

My primary concern is that this ordinance, as written, threatens to dismantle our city's vital harm reduction infrastructure – the very services that demonstrably prevent overdose deaths, reduce the transmission of infectious diseases, and serve as critical first points of contact connecting vulnerable individuals to a broader spectrum of care, including treatment and recovery services. It appears poised to redirect essential resources towards a narrower, potentially mandated, abstinence-focused model. This approach disregards the complex realities of substance use disorder and the established medical consensus that effective care requires a comprehensive continuum. Recovery pathways are diverse and deeply personal; imposing a single, mandated approach is not only counterproductive but risks alienating the very people we need to engage. One size simply does not fit all in healthcare.

San Francisco has historically been a leader in pragmatic, public health-driven responses.

Our implementation of SACPA was groundbreaking precisely because we, uniquely among California counties, chose a public health framework over a purely punitive one. Guided by experts like Program Director Bruce Occeña and treatment advocates like Phil Castiglione, we meticulously built a system embracing a full continuum of care – from outreach and harm reduction to outpatient support, diverse treatment modalities, and residential programs. The core principle was, and must remain: meet people where they are to foster engagement and facilitate lasting positive change.

Harm reduction is not antithetical to recovery; it is an indispensable component of the recovery continuum for many. It keeps people alive and connected, creating opportunities for change. Mayor Frank Jordan recognized this fundamental truth decades ago when he courageously implemented syringe access programs, understanding it was the necessary, life-saving course of action. Those programs saved countless lives then, and they continue to do so today.

Furthermore, it presents a stark policy inconsistency to actively encourage alcohol consumption within designated "entertainment districts" while simultaneously considering measures that would restrict access to evidence-based, life-saving harm reduction tools for other populations facing different health challenges. Our public health strategies should be applied equitably and guided by evidence, not stigma.

To proceed with this ordinance in its current form is to court disaster. Weakening our harm reduction infrastructure will not accelerate recovery; it will inevitably lead to an *increase* in preventable overdose deaths. It also significantly heightens the risk of resurgence in infectious diseases like HIV and Hepatitis C, potentially igniting new epidemics reminiscent of the devastating crises of the 1980s and 1990s. This would be a tragic reversal of hard-won public health gains.

I urge you to reconsider this ordinance and ensure that any path forward strengthens, rather than dismantles, San Francisco's long-standing commitment to a comprehensive, evidence-based continuum of care that includes robust harm reduction services. Let us build upon our legacy of pragmatic, life-saving public health leadership, not abandon it.

Thank you for your time and consideration.



Paul A. Aguilar
Treasurer, Board of Directors
Marty's Place Affordable Housing
Corporation

Mobile [\(415\) 577-7755](tel:(415)577-7755)
Website www.mpahc.org
Email sfpaulie@gmail.com
Address [1165 Treat Ave. San Francisco CA 94110](http://1165TreatAve.com)



From: [Kathleen Stewart](#)
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Support Supervisor Dorsey's Recovery First Ordinance
Date: Thursday, April 24, 2025 11:02:40 AM

This message is from outside the City email system. Do not open links or attachments from untrusted sources.

Clerk Monique Crayton,

I'm writing to express my support for Supervisor Dorsey's "Recovery First" ordinance which calls for the cessation of illicit drug use to be the primary goal of our public health policy for people struggling with addiction.

For too long San Francisco has failed to prioritize long-term recovery for people who are struggling with addiction. Instead, our City has acted as if the best we can do is give drug users clean supplies and Narcan, while we look the other way and hope they don't die.

Supervisor Dorsey's legislation is pragmatic. By calling for the cessation of illicit drug use as the "north star" for our public health policy, it will align our health policy with virtually every other public health system in the world. His policy is also progressive, embracing treatments like prescription medicines such as Methadone and Suboxone, as well as harm reduction, as part of the continuum of care.

Without Supervisor Dorsey's "Recovery First" ordinance, our public health policy is deeply flawed, suggesting that people should not expect to recover, despite mountains of evidence that people can overcome addiction to illicit drugs. At a time when synthetic drugs are flooding our City, our policy of tolerating illicit drugs sends a dangerous message to our children.

I urge you to support the "Recovery First" ordinance. This approach isn't about choosing between compassion and accountability; it's about a common sense reform that's long overdue.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Stewart
concern-clatter.6u@icloud.com

San Francisco, California 94123

From: [Ismene Grohmann](#)
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Support Supervisor Dorsey's Recovery First Ordinance
Date: Thursday, April 24, 2025 10:16:22 AM

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Clerk Monique Crayton,

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I urge you to support the "Recovery First" ordinance. This approach isn't about choosing between compassion and accountability; it's about a common sense reform that's long overdue.

Sincerely,

Ismene Grohmann
ismene.grohmann@gmail.com

San Francisco, California 94103

From: mrouppet@icloud.com
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Cc: [DorseyStaff \(BOS\)](#); [SauterStaff](#); [MahmoodStaff](#)
Subject: File 250190 - Administrative Code, Recovery First; Opposed
Date: Thursday, April 24, 2025 9:39:18 AM

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City & County of San Francisco

Board of Supervisors

Attention: Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee.

Thursday, April 24, 2025 Meeting

File: 250190, Agenda Item 2.

Re: "Recovery First." Amends Administrative Code to establish the cessation of illicit drug use and attainment of long-term recovery from substance use disorders as the primary objective of the City's drug policy.

Dear Honorable Supervisors Dorsey, Mahmood, and Sauter.

My name is Michael Rouppe, founder of the Harvey Milk LGBTQ Club's HIV/AIDS Caucus, co-author of *The San Francisco Principles 2020*, and I am a District 9 resident. I am writing you in-opposition to the current draft of the "Recovery First" ordinance amendment and asking you to align the definition with the nationally recognized definition by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA). SAMSHA's defines recovery as "a process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live in a self-directed life, and strive to reach their full potential." This amendment in its current form does not align and I am asking you to vote against it.

The "Recovery First" ordinance does not include a variation of recognized pathways to recovery but defines it as "abstinence from illicit drugs..." and disregards decades of evidence-based data used to establish San Francisco's harm reduction policies. Harm reduction isn't the problem in San Francisco; it's leadership that does not understand it or know how to advocate for it properly. Cities around the world have used harm reduction successfully to address the issues we have here but the ongoing problem has been people in elected office here are unwilling to listen to those who have done the work successfully, and the cycle becomes prescriptive U.S. politicians who value their own opinions over facts and the cycles repeat with decades of failure. Narrowing the definition of recovery does not change what we see happening in San Francisco but will divert essential funding into other non-recovery areas to uphold a more punitive model that we know will not work with a sorry record to prove it.

If recovery were truly a one-size fits all policy, Nancy Reagan would have solved it decades ago during the AIDS crisis from where harm reduction came and saved countless lives. Just Say No was a slogan, but it's not realistic and data do not support it. Decades of work have shown us since our earliest needle exchanges here that our crises are only compounded when policy makers fight evidence-based approaches, and it costs lives and funding. Many of us were on the frontlines then and took great risks to share our knowledge with you today. I am asking you to hear what we're saying, oppose the current ordinance, and re-draft it to include a definition that aligns with SAMSHA and recognize recovery as a spectrum rather than as a linear approach.

Thank you for your time and consideration on this item.

Sincerely,

Michael Rouppet

From: [Anna Morfit](#)
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Support Supervisor Dorsey's Recovery First Ordinance
Date: Thursday, April 24, 2025 7:34:40 AM

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I'm writing to express my support for Supervisor Dorsey's "Recovery First" ordinance which calls for the cessation of illicit drug use to be the primary goal of our public health policy for people struggling with addiction.

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Without Supervisor Dorsey's "Recovery First" ordinance, our public health policy is deeply flawed, suggesting that people should not expect to recover, despite mountains of evidence that people can overcome addiction to illicit drugs. At a time when synthetic drugs are flooding our City, our policy of tolerating illicit drugs sends a dangerous message to our children.

I urge you to support the "Recovery First" ordinance. This approach isn't about choosing between compassion and accountability; it's about a common sense reform that's long overdue.

Sincerely,

Anna Morfit
annamorfit@gmail.com

San Francisco, California 94118

From: [Barbara J Dwyer](#)
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Support Supervisor Dorsey's Recovery First Ordinance
Date: Thursday, April 24, 2025 12:08:27 AM

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I urge you to support the "Recovery First" ordinance. This approach isn't about choosing between compassion and accountability; it's about a common sense reform that's long overdue.

Sincerely,

Barbara J Dwyer
montereydivingwoman@gmail.com

San Francisco, California 94114

From: [Josephine Zhao](#)
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Support Supervisor Dorsey's Recovery First Ordinance
Date: Wednesday, April 23, 2025 9:39:58 PM

This message is from outside the City email system. Do not open links or attachments from untrusted sources.

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Sincerely,

Josephine Zhao
josephine_zhao@yahoo.com

San Francisco, California 94122

From: [Michael Fransen](#)
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Support Supervisor Dorsey's Recovery First Ordinance
Date: Wednesday, April 23, 2025 9:37:25 PM

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Sincerely,

Michael Fransen
mjfransen@gmail.com

San Francisco, California 94107

From: [Cynthia Chou](#)
To: [Crayton, Monique \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Support Supervisor Dorsey's Recovery First Ordinance
Date: Wednesday, April 23, 2025 9:22:31 PM

This message is from outside the City email system. Do not open links or attachments from untrusted sources.

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Sincerely,

Cynthia Chou
cynchou8@gmail.com

San Francisco, California 94112

**DRUG
POLICY
ALLIANCE.**

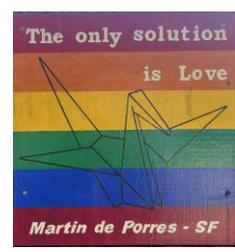
**NATIONAL
HARM REDUCTION
COALITION**



SKYWATCHERS



Maitri



YOUTH SERVICES



**Vilomah
FOUNDATION**



**ONE VOICE
RECOVERY**



**IN THE
WORKS**



May 14, 2025

Connie Chan, Supervisor First District
Stephen Sherrill, Supervisor Second District
Danny Sauter, Supervisor Third District
Joel Engardio, Supervisor Fourth District
Bilal Mahmood, Supervisor Fifth District
Matt Dorsey, Supervisor Sixth District

Myrna Melgar, Supervisor Seventh District
Rafael Mandelman, Supervisor Eight District
Jackie Fielder, Supervisor Ninth District
Shamann Walton, Supervisor Tenth District
Chyanne Chen, Supervisor Eleventh District
Daniel Lurie, Mayor of San Francisco

Legislative Chamber, Room 250
City Hall, 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102

Re: Neutral on File NO. 250190 Recovery First Ordinance

Dear San Francisco Board of Supervisors,

We write to express **neutrality** to the Ordinance No. 250190, also known as the ‘Recovery First Drug Policy,’ which now states that long term remission, as defined, for substance use disorders (SUD) for individuals, with the help of fully supported and staffed evidence-based recovery and behavioral health services, shall be the primary objective of San Francisco’s SUD treatment policy. As advocates working on policies that prioritize social support and community well-being, we believe that San Francisco’s drug policies should be grounded in scientific evidence, health, and equity. To that end, we would like to also thank the San Francisco Marin Medical Society for their support in changing the aforementioned language.

This expanded definition is more aligned with the consensus definitions developed by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, American Medical Association, and American Society of Addiction Medicine’s definition of recovery as “a process of change though which individuals improve their health and wellness, live a self-directed life, and strive to reach their full potential,” but critically, does not limit treatment aims to the singular objective of freedom from illicit drug use. Recovery is about connection to care — connection to resources, services, housing, treatment, trauma treatment, to community, and ultimately, to life itself. **We remain neutral** as it is critical that any ordinance guiding San Francisco substance use disorder treatment policy explicitly include capacity expansion for harm reduction approaches and overdose prevention strategies which have been proven to lead to lasting connections to care.

After corresponding with Supervisor Dorsey’s office, we appreciate that he addressed our concerns through a series of amendments, the focus of which was to broaden the definition of recovery to acknowledge the non-linear, iterative processes to treat addiction. Returning to drug use, or relapsing into substance use, is a component of the recovery change process, and for this reason, it is critical to implement strategies to improve the retention of non-abstinent patients in the continuum of care. This is why it was also critical for the ordinance to expand solely from Medicated Assisted Treatment to include contingency management, residential treatment programs, and more. All of which are proven effective treatments that reduce drug use and increase treatment retention, which when utilized in tandem with harm reduction efforts and abstinence-based efforts create a holistic continuum of care for our community members to utilize.

San Francisco has been at the forefront of adopting innovative strategies and has moved away long ago from the traditional view that abstinence is the sole aim and only valid outcome of addiction treatment. After 14 months of overdose deaths decreasing in San Francisco after their historic high in August 2023, fatal overdoses are growing again with 65 accidental overdose fatalities in the city from January to March 2025.¹ The magnitude of this crisis underscores the need to **invest in the continuum of approaches** available to support individuals in their recovery, including limiting infectious disease transmission, providing housing and medical referrals, and expanding low-barrier treatment access across the city.

The issue with the system is not failed interventions - but lack of treatment capacity, options, and barriers to treatment. To that end, we applaud the city for increasing the amount of recovery and treatment beds as announced late April, and we request that ongoing support also be directed towards overdose prevention, syringe service programs, and other pathways to recovery. **The only way to meaningfully tackle the public health crisis is to invest in a robust spectrum that works in tandem.**

We hope that the legislative process for this ordinance showcases the need for **all of us to work together to achieve our shared goals, and not levying attacks against proven, health-centered, and compassionate services.** We invite further collaboration from the Board of Supervisors to strengthen our current system of services. For questions about our position, please contact echen@drugpolicy.org.

Respectfully,

Grey Gardner
California State Director
Drug Policy Alliance

Laura Guzman
Executive Director
National Harm Reduction Coalition

Jennifer Friedenbach
Executive Director
Coalition on Homelessness

Calder Lorenz
Director of Operations
The Gubbio Project

Celestina Pearl
Director of Outreach and Harm Reduction
Lyon Martin

Jes Distad
Vice President of Communications
Harvey Milk LGBTQ Democratic Club

Anne Bluethenthal
Lead Artist
ABD Productions / Skywatchers

Anna Berg
Clinical Program Director
The Harm Reduction Therapy Center

Analise Velazquez
Advocate
Underbelly Archive Project

Michael E. Armentrout
Chief Executive Officer
Maitri Compassionate Care

Lucie R.

Larisa Pedroncelli

¹ SF.gov. "Preliminary Unintentional Drug Overdose Deaths." Accessed May 12, 2025. <https://app.powerbigov.us/view?r=eyJrIjojOWJINmQxNDAtMWRiNy00NGM1LTljNzEtZDMyYmY4YjRjMDQ3IiwidCI6IjlyZDVjMmNmLWNIM2UtNDQzZC05YTdmLWRRmY2MwMjMxZjczZiJ9&pageName=ReportSection085cc28cbaffa9384119>.

Volunteer
Martin de Porres House

Lauren Hall
Co-Founder and Co-CEO
Delivering Innovation in Supportive Housing

Britt Creech
Operations Manager
Vanguard Lab

Kevin Liu
Community Organizer
Supportive Housing Overdose Prevention Network

Marnie Regen
Division Director of Government
Larkin Street Youth Services

Kenneth B Hughs
Pastor
St. Mark Institutional Missionary Baptist Church

Justice Dumlao
Community Mobilization Manager
Treatment on Demand

Susan Ousterman
Executive Director
Violomah Foundation

Patrick Rezac, SUDRC
Founder/Executive Director
One Voice Recovery, Inc.

Katia Padilla
COO Policy, Equitable and Strategic Partnerships
Latino Task Force

Kaylena Katz
Member
SFSU Public Health Organization of Graduate
Students

Laura Thomas
Senior Director of HIV and Harm Reduction Policy
San Francisco AIDS Foundation

Chair
SF Latino Task Force Street Needs Committee

Joseph Mitchell
Peer Support Specialist
Abode Services

Mary Howe
Executive Director
Homeless Youth Alliance

Paul Boden
Director
Western Regional Advocacy Project

Ry Dalporto
Volunteer
Harm Reduction Outreach Collective (HROC)

Kathleen Cochran
Founder
Moms for All Paths

Justice Dumlao
Community Mobilization Manager
Safer Inside Coalition

Taeko Frost
Principal & Co-Founder
In the Works

Ethan Makulec
Executive Director
Humboldt Area Center for Harm Reduction (HACHR)

Kevin Liu
Community Organizer
Rad Mission Neighbors

Joseph Wilson
Executive Director
Hospitality House

Jenn Autry
Founder
Black Heart Harm Reduction