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,

Outlook

Administrative Code - "Recovery First Drug Policy," File No. 250190 - SUPPORT

From stanton.glantz@sonic.net <stanton.glantz@sonic.net>
Date Mon 4/21/2025 8:24 AM
To Board of Supervisors (BOS) <board.of.supervisors@sfgov.org>
Cc Dorsey, Matt (BOS) <matt.dorsey@sfgov.org>

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

I am a retired UCSF professor of medicine and founding director of the UCSF Center for Tobacco Control Research and Education where, among other things, I conducted research on the health effects of secondhand tobacco smoke and tobacco control policies including smoke-free policies. I have testified for every tobacco control Laws introduced at the Board of Supervisors since the 1980s and assisted in the implementation of some of those laws. I served as treasurer for the 1983 Proposition P campaign, which successfully dedended San Francisco's new workplace smoking law against a referendum by the tobacco industry, handing the industry its first electoral defeat.

The original meaning of "smoke-free" was "free from secondhand tobacco smoke." We were not urging smokers to quit smoking, viewing that is a matter for their personal choice; all we wanted was for them to exercise that choice in a way which did not hurt bystanders who chose not to smoke. We now know in hindsight that by creating smoke-free environments, we fundamentally change the social norms around smoking in a way to create an environment that supported smokers in their decisions to stop smoking and undermined decades of tobacco industry efforts to create a social support system which made smoking the norm.

In particular, we now know that the creation of smoke-free environments (including workplaces and homes) help smokers quit by…

- Encouraging and facilitating quit attempts
- Longer duration of quit attempts
- Greater use of smoking cessation medications and increase medication effectiveness
- Reduced cigarette consumption

The combined effect of these factors is increased number of smokers who were freed themselves from nicotine addiction.[1]

In addition, smoke-free environments are associated with less smoking initiation by young people.

Over time, as a result of these changes, the definition of "smoke-free" came to apply to individual smokers, meaning "free from giving money to the tobacco industry," i.e., no longer smoking or using other tobacco products.

While I am not an expert on illicit drug use and its treatment, this experience with tobacco suggests a comparable change in the way we think about illicit drug use leads me to support the "Recovery First Drug Policy" because it clearly establishes freedom from giving money to the organizations that sell drugs as the desired norm. It also could lead to the encouragement of facilities, including housing, for people who are committed to becoming drug-free. Providing drug-free environments for these people would likely facilitate their efforts to become drug-free by removing visual and behavioral cues created by other people using drugs.

While the proposed legislation still allows for intermediate steps, particularly harm reduction efforts operated independently of organizations that sell drugs, clearly stating that the long-term goal is a drug-free society would reflect what we have learned in the progress against tobacco.

Thank you for your consideration.

NOTE: An excellent summary of the research supporting these conclusions can be found in the following publication: *Office on Smoking and Health (US). The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke: A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta (GA): Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (US); 2006*; pages 609-628. Available from: *https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK44324/*

---

[1] An excellent summary of the research supporting these conclusions can be found in the following publication: *Office on Smoking and Health (US). The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke: A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta (GA): Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (US); 2006*; pages 609-628. Available from: *https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK44324/*

POSITIVE DIRECTIONS EQUALS CHANGE INC.

- Our Mission –

To inspire personal and social responsibility to the African American community through advocacy, education and results- oriented service.

For more Information:

Administrative Office

Phone (415) 401-0199
Fax (415) 401-0175

Cedric Akbar:

Phone (415) 740-5587

Supervisor Matt Dorsey
San Francisco Board of Supervisors
City Hall, Room 244
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102

Re: Letter of Support for the "Recovery First" Drug Policy Ordinance

Dear Supervisor Dorsey,

I am writing to express my strong support for your proposed *"Recovery First"* ordinance, which establishes the cessation of illicit drug use and long-term recovery from addiction as the primary objective of San Francisco's drug policy. This is a bold and necessary step toward aligning our city's fragmented approaches to addiction under a unified and compassionate goal: recovery!

Your legislation brings long-overdue clarity to the city's drug policy by ensuring that harm-reduction efforts are clearly framed as essential pathways—not endpoints—toward treatment and long-term healing. This reframing is especially critical in today's crisis climate, where the rise of synthetic drugs like fentanyl and methamphetamine continues to claim lives and devastate our San Francisco neighborhoods.

As someone who has an intimate relationship with addiction and is now in long-term recovery, and as a San Francisco resident working in the substance use field, I know firsthand the life-and-death stakes of this issue. I support a range of recovery pathways—including faith-based programs, 12-step fellowships, therapeutic communities, and evidence-based treatment—and I've witnessed the profound impact each can have. But I've also seen the challenges that arise when our city's approach to addiction lacks a clear and unifying direction.

Without a clearly defined goal, even the most well-intentioned services can become disconnected or lose their purpose. The *"Recovery First"* ordinance provides the guiding principle our city urgently needs.

By adopting this ordinance, San Francisco has an opportunity to lead once again—this time in reimagining drug policy with integrity, urgency, and a humane commitment to transformation.

Thank you for your leadership and for sharing your own recovery journey in service of helping others. I urge the full Board of Supervisors to pass this vital ordinance without delay.

Sincerely,

Cedric G. Akbar CADC, RAS, NAADAC
Behavioral Health Specialist/Program Director

BAYAREA COUNCIL

May 5, 2025

The Honorable Matt Dorsey
Supervisor
City & County of San Francisco
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Dr.
San Francisco, CA

Re: Recovery First Ordinance

Dear Supervisor Dorsey,

Thank you for introducing legislation to prioritize long-term remission from Substance Use Disorder as San Francisco's primary addiction treatment goal. For too long, San Francisco has been seen as a symbol of addiction and despair when it can—and should—instead become a symbol of health and recovery.

Since 2011, overdose deaths among homeless Californians have increased a tragic and inexcusable 488 percent. By some estimates, drug overdose claims the lives of two San Franciscans every day. San Francisco cannot maintain its reputation as a world class city—for people, workers, tourism, and business—with such despair on our streets. That's why the Bay Area Council is co-sponsoring legislation—AB 255 (Haney)—with Mayor Daniel Lurie and the Salvation Army to allow existing state homeless housing programs to support permanent drug-free housing. This ordinance is consistent with efforts at the state level to elevate the importance of supporting recovery from substance use disorder wherever possible as an urgent humanitarian, moral, and economic necessity.

By enshrining recovery as official city policy, this ordinance ensures all city agencies are rowing in the same direction to achieve the same goal. For that reason, the Bay Area Council is happy to support this legislation.

Sincerely,

Jim Wunderman
President & CEO
Bay Area Council

Castro Country Club
A SOBER COMMUNITY CENTER

May 4th, 2025

Dear Supervisor Dorsey,

On behalf of the Castro Country Club, I am writing to express support for your Recovery First ordinance.

The Castro Country Club is a safe and sober community center for all people and a refuge for the LGBTQ recovery community. We provide programs and services that help people change their lives by supporting personal growth. For more than 40 years, through peer-to-peer recovery meetings, camaraderie, community and caring, our supportive events and workforce development opportunities encourage individuals to find hope and strength in their recovery. Our mission and values are firmly rooted in the idea that everyone deserves the possibility of recovery and that everyone has value.

In my ten years of work, I have seen remission from substance use disorder. Your Recovery First amended language gives me hope that all service providers can row in the same direction and help people suffering find the help they need to live meaningful, self-directed lives. I am also of the opinion that abstinence is also harm reduction. I say that as a person in Recovery that needed the gentle nudge, not a mandate to quit. Recovery First, in the form I currently understand, seems like compassionate accountability.

We look forward to continuing talks that further the reach of city services to help our resident neighbors find the help they need.

If you have any questions, please reach out.

Thank you,

Billy Lemon
Executive Director Castro Country Club
wlemon@castrocountryclub.org
(415)684-5587

General Truck Drivers, Automotive and Allied Workers. General jurisdiction in Marin, Sonoma, Mendocino and Lake Counties and Automotive in San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara and San Benito Counties, California

TEAMSTERS LOCAL UNION No. 665

AFFILIATED WITH THE INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF TEAMSTERS
& TEAMSTERS JOINT COUNCIL No. 7

Tony Delorio
Principal Officer
Secretary-Treasurer

Michael Yates
President
Business Agent

Florencio Sinogui
Vice President
Business Agent

Juan Gallo
Recording Secretary
Business Agent

Robin Terrell
Trustee

Will Thomsen
Trustee

Arthur Hilmoe
Trustee

Joe Matekel
Business Agent

Mark Malouf
Business Agent

Tom Woods
Business Agent

Peggy Condori
Member Services

Isela Jacques-Ramirez
Office Manager
Bookkeeper

Carla Wong
Titan Operator

David Svoboda
Titan Operator

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

Re: Recovery First Ordinance

Dear President Mandelman and the San Francisco Board of Supervisors:
On behalf of the members of **Teamsters Local 665**, I write to express our strong support for the *"Recovery First" Ordinance* authored by Supervisor Matt Dorsey.

Our members serve the public every day—operating shuttle buses, staffing parking facilities, working in hotels and event venues, and supporting key public services. Many of them work in areas deeply affected by open-air drug use and the visible impacts of untreated addiction. Some have personally struggled with substance use disorder or supported loved ones through recovery. They are witnesses to the human toll of this crisis—and they know the status quo isn't working.

The Recovery First Ordinance rightly establishes a clear and long-overdue objective for San Francisco's drug policy: helping individuals achieve long-term remission from substance use disorder and live self-directed, healthy lives free from illicit drug use. For too long, our City's response has lacked coordination and clarity. This legislation provides a necessary North Star for city departments, contractors, and service providers alike.

We believe that every San Franciscan deserves the opportunity to recover and rebuild. The Recovery First Ordinance affirms that belief—and it aligns the City's public health strategy with what we would want for our own families.

We commend Supervisor Dorsey's leadership and urge the full Board of Supervisors to adopt this critical legislation. San Francisco must act with both urgency and compassion to reverse the overdose crisis and support recovery at every level.

Sincerely,

Tony Delorio

Tony Delorio
Principal Officer
Teamsters Local Union No. 665

Main Office
150 Executive Park Boulevard, Suite 4400, San Francisco, CA 94134 415-347-7406 Email: memberservices@teamsters665.org

UNITED • PLAYAZ

1038 Howard Street · San Francisco, CA 94103 **www.unitedplayaz.org**

April 29, 2025

Supervisor Matt Dorsey
San Francisco Board of Supervisors
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102

Dear Supervisor Dorsey,

On behalf of **United Playaz**, I write to express our full support of the goals that will be accomplished through your **Recovery First** legislation and the amendments you are proposing to strengthen it. We commend your leadership for placing long-term remission and true recovery at the center of San Francisco's substance use disorder treatment policies — a direction we believe is critical if we are going to save lives and heal our city.

For over 30 years, United Playaz has been on the ground, working directly with youth, families, and community members who have been devastated by drugs, violence, and the lack of opportunities. We know firsthand the pain addiction brings to our streets and the generational damage it causes. That is why we strongly back your efforts to make the City's **primary goal** one that supports people in achieving a *self-directed and healthy life, free from illicit drug use*.

At United Playaz, we always say, *"It takes the hood to save the hood."* That means we believe in solutions that combine compassion, accountability, and real resources. Your **Recovery First** ordinance is exactly that: a policy that brings together our city's health system, treatment providers, and public safety agencies with a common goal of helping people *truly recover*. It also rightly recognizes that San Francisco's biggest barrier right now is not a lack of will, but a lack of treatment facilities, staff, and resources. We stand with you in calling for investment in the beds, services, and trained professionals our community desperately needs.

Supervisor Dorsey, your personal journey in recovery gives this legislation the authenticity and heart that our city needs in this fight. United Playaz is proud to support the goals that will be accomplished through your **Recovery First** legislation. We look forward to standing with you as this moves forward and to working together to ensure that recovery is not just possible, but expected, supported, and celebrated in every corner of our city. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or require additional information at 415-716-4100.

In peace,

Rudy Corpuz Jr.
Founder/ Director

SAN FRANCISCO MARIN MEDICAL SOCIETY

April 22, 2025

Supervisor Matt Dorsey
City Hall
1 Dr. Carlton B Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102

Re: Ordinance 250190 (Dorsey)
Position: Support if Amended

Dear Supervisor Dorsey:

The San Francisco Marin Medical Society (SFMMS), representing more than 3,500 physicians of every medical specialty and mode of practice in San Francisco and Marin Counties, has adopted a Support if Amended position on your Ordinance 250190 – Recovery First Policy. We greatly appreciate your tireless work to improve the lives of those suffering from substance use disorder and believe some adjustments to the Ordinance will advance those efforts and help build consensus.

SFMMS's proposed amendments seek to:

1) Add nuance and clarification to what we believe is the aspirational goal of substance use disorder treatment, the paths to achieve that goal, and the prerequisite elements San Francisco must provide to ensure the goals can be reached.
2) Center the fundamental need to ensure availability of evidence-based substance use disorder treatment facilities and providers (regardless of program type), without which any definition or policy goal is meaningless.
3) Rise above the heated rhetoric and mistrust that have needlessly complicated an already challenging issue to move the city toward consensus.

SFMMS's proposed amendments are as follows, with explanation below:

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

(1) "Remission" means overcoming the illness of substance use disorder to the point of living a self-directed and healthy life, free from illicit drug use.

(2) "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. This may include participation in a Medication-Assisted-Treatment program administered by a licensed healthcare provider in accordance with applicable laws and medical guidance, outpatient residential treatment, contingency management, and injury prevention services as determined by the individual in need. ~~abstinence from illicit drugs, and shall include participation in a Medication-Assisted-Treatment program administered by a qualified healthcare provider in accordance with applicable laws and medical guidance.~~

(~~2~~3) "Substance Use Disorder" has the meaning set forth in the 5th edition of the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, as may be amended or revised from time to time.

(c) Policy. ~~The cessation of illicit drug use and attainment of long-term Recovery from~~ Long-term remission of substance use disorders for individuals, with the help of fully supported and staffed evidence-based recovery and behavioral health services, shall be the primary ~~objective~~ goal of the City's substance use disorder treatment ~~drug~~ policy.

Background

After the substantial rise in overdose deaths caused by fentanyl and exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, policymakers have sought strategies to combat this devastating trend. Physicians and other health care professionals on the frontlines of care have been guided by evidence-based population-level interventions across a variety of settings that link individuals to care, initiate medications, and support sustained treatment and recovery.

In San Francisco, the rise of overdose deaths has been accompanied by an increase in publicly visible drug dealing and drug use. While causation cannot be proven between these co-occurring situations, the resulting public debate about where and how to deal with those suffering from substance use disorder has been greatly influenced by these circumstances. This has led to an increasingly polarizing public debate that oversimplifies the complex issues involved, leading to a narrative that policymakers must choose between supporting "abstinence" based approaches or "harm reduction" based approaches. This narrow debate has also caused substance use disorder-related terms (e.g., abstinence, harm reduction, recovery) to become politically and emotionally charged. As such, there is a significant lack of trust between all sides.

The mistrust has led some opponents of this ordinance to claim (though it is not mentioned anywhere in the text) that it is part of an effort to require compulsory detox and treatment through police action. It has also led some supporters to characterize those with concerns about the ordinance as irresponsible in their treatment strategies and blinded to the public safety dangers on San Francisco streets.

Despite this narrative, the data shows that recovery is often a non-linear process of self-actualization where harm reduction efforts, abstinence, and treatment are not in opposition with one another or mutually exclusive. If properly provided, they are all complementary components of optimal substance use disorder systems. What gets lost in the debate is that the biggest obstacle to recovery and remission facing San Franciscans with substance use disorder is the severe lack of facilities and the staff necessary to provide robust behavioral health services, without which none of these strategies will be effective.

Rationale for Amendments

Ordinance 250190 has the laudable goal of creating a "North Star" for San Francisco's government services to combat substance use disorder. While it is clear by your actions and comments that you support harm reduction strategies, if someone were to read the Ordinance without any background of you as a legislator, they could come to the incorrect conclusion that your goal is to prioritize abstinence at the expense of alternative policies like harm reduction. We fully believe that you share SFMMS's goal to maximize evidence-based treatment for all who need it, with seamless transition to ongoing recovery and sobriety by whatever such program works for the individual. SFMMS's proposed amendments seek to clarify that goal through a more inclusive definition of "Recovery," so that the Ordinance is not misinterpreted.

One major challenge when defining the word "Recovery" is that different groups within the health community have pre-existing definitions of the word. Some define it as the process by which individuals improve their health (e.g., "I am in Recovery"). Others define it as the end point of the healing process (e.g. "I have recovered"). In the context of substance use, it has traditionally meant the journey an individual undertook or is currently going through to improve their health, often with the ultimate goal of sobriety. The proposed amendments seek to clarify the journey (i.e., Recovery) from the destination (i.e., Remission).

Lastly and most importantly, SFMMS believes that any policy, prioritization, or goal related to San Francisco's substance use disorder services and strategy must recognize the largest barrier to improved

health: a severe lack of access to care and treatment due to an insufficient supply of substance use disorder treatment facilities, beds, and providers. An overarching San Francisco goal related to substance use disorder treatment must recognize this primary obstacle to care and seek to address it.

Should you have any questions about these proposed amendments, please do not hesitate to contact Adam Francis, Senior Director of Advocacy and Policy (afrancis@sfmmf.org). As always, we greatly appreciate your efforts on this matter, as well as your openness to continued dialogue as we work through these complicated important issues.

Sincerely,
Heyman Oo, MD
Chair, Advocacy and Policy Committee
San Francisco Marin Medical Society

CC: San Francisco Board of Supervisors
Angela Cavillo, Clerk to the Board of Supervisors

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: Jaime Ballew Zerbe
To: Board of Supervisors (BOS)
Subject: Letter in support of Supervisor Dorsey"s Recovery First Language
Date: Tuesday, May 6, 2025 9:08:07 AM
Attachments: advisory board–SF-2.pdf

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

Hello,

Please find attached a letter in support of Supervisor Dorsey's Recovery First language signed by leaders and members of the FDPS team. We would humbly request for this to be a part of the official record surrounding the debate of this language.

Please let me know if you have any questions or are unable to read the document.

Thank you!

Jaime Ballew Zerbe
Chief of Staff
Smart Approaches to Marijuana
Foundation for Drug Policy Solutions
(540) 849-0107

6 May 2025

Supervisor Dorsey,

On behalf of the Leadership Council of the Foundation for Drug Policy Solutions (FDPS), a non-partisan organization that advocates for a health-first approach to drug policy, we write in support of your "Recovery First" ordinance. We concur that the "Recovery First" vision will "provide needed aspirational policy direction" and that it would offer "a clear and unifying North Star for the new and unique challenges we face in the era of synthetic drugs," as you outlined.

San Francisco has been facing an unrelenting drug crisis. The overdose death rate in San Francisco has increased from a rate of 80.2 per 100,000 in 2020 to 99.5 per 100,000 in 2023. Among Black individuals in the city, the rate increased from 403.2 to 606.1 per 100,000. It is evident that a new approach is needed—too many Americans are needlessly dying from drugs.

San Franscisco's approach to drug policy must be grounded in evidence and feature recovery as a central pillar. A recent editorial in the *New England Journal of Medicine* by John Kelly, Nora Volkow, and Howard Koh noted that "a growing array of highly cost-effective, community-based recovery-support services in the United States is helping to catalyze and sustain long-term healing," concluding that the incorporation of recovery-support services into the traditional treatment infrastructure "could help reduce people's susceptibility to SUD recurrence...and increase the odds that some of the most vulnerable members of society will not only survive, but ultimately thrive." The nation's response to the drug crisis is evolving by placing treatment and recovery at the forefront, and San Francisco has the opportunity to be a leader in this movement.

Similar to your point that "the logical implication of prioritizing an objective as 'primary' reasonably suggests other objectives that may be secondary, tertiary, and otherwise subsequent," officials must not forget about the other central tenets of drug policy, including prevention, treatment, harm reduction, and supply reduction. The "Recovery First" ordinance will serve to orient the city's services toward helping people currently experiencing addiction to achieve recovery, while continuing to prevent use, reduce harm, and disrupt the illicit market.

The millions of Americans in recovery provide hope to those currently experiencing substance use disorder and demonstrate that it can be overcome. It is our position that the "Recovery First" ordinance will help more San Franciscans to achieve recovery and ultimately live healthy, drug-free lives.

Sincerely,

Kevin A. Sabet
Co-Founder and CEO, Foundation for Drug Policy Solutions

Luke Niforatos
Co-Founder and EVP, Foundation for Drug Policy Solutions

Tom Wolf
Director, West Coast Initiatives, Foundation for Drug Policy Solutions

Thomas Mutryn
Foundation for Drug Policy Solutions Board Member

James William Down
Foundation for Drug Policy Solutions Leadership Council

Marc J. Bern
Smart Approaches to Marijuana Board Member

From:	Adrian Covert
To:	Board of Supervisors (BOS)
Cc:	Donovan, Dominica (BOS)
Subject:	Support (Recovery Ordinance)
Date:	Monday, May 5, 2025 6:56:06 PM
Attachments:	image001.png image002.png image003.png image004.png image005.png DorseySupport.pdf

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

Greetings Clerk of the Board,

Please see the attached letter of support for supervisor Dorsey's recovery ordinance from the Bay Area Council. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Best,

Adrian Covert

Adrian Covert
Senior Vice President, Public Policy
Phone: 415-519-9141 | **Email**: acovert@bayareacouncil.org
The Historic Klamath, Pier 9, The Embarcadero, San Francisco
www.bayareacouncil.org

BAY AREA COUNCIL

HISTORIC KLAMATH
BAY AREA COUNCIL

BAYAREA COUNCIL

May 5, 2025

The Honorable Matt Dorsey
Supervisor
City & County of San Francisco
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Dr.
San Francisco, CA

Re: Recovery First Ordinance

Dear Supervisor Dorsey,

Thank you for introducing legislation to prioritize long-term remission from Substance Use Disorder as San Francisco's primary addiction treatment goal. For too long, San Francisco has been seen as a symbol of addiction and despair when it can—and should—instead become a symbol of health and recovery.

Since 2011, overdose deaths among homeless Californians have increased a tragic and inexcusable 488 percent. By some estimates, drug overdose claims the lives of two San Franciscans every day. San Francisco cannot maintain its reputation as a world class city—for people, workers, tourism, and business—with such despair on our streets. That's why the Bay Area Council is co-sponsoring legislation—AB 255 (Haney)—with Mayor Daniel Lurie and the Salvation Army to allow existing state homeless housing programs to support permanent drug-free housing. This ordinance is consistent with efforts at the state level to elevate the importance of supporting recovery from substance use disorder wherever possible as an urgent humanitarian, moral, and economic necessity.

By enshrining recovery as official city policy, this ordinance ensures all city agencies are rowing in the same direction to achieve the same goal. For that reason, the Bay Area Council is happy to support this legislation.

Sincerely,

Jim Wunderman
President & CEO
Bay Area Council