

NLC RESOLUTION #38

IN SUPPORT OF FEDERAL EFFORTS TO COMBAT THE EPIDEMIC OF HEROIN AND PRESCRIPTION OPIOID ABUSE

WHEREAS, cities throughout the nation – both urban and rural – are dealing with the tragic effects of the epidemic of heroin and prescription opioid abuse; and

WHEREAS, heroin and opioid addiction is an epidemic ravaging urban, suburban, and rural communities in our country;¹ and

WHEREAS, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, opioids (including prescription opioids, heroin, and fentanyl) killed more than 42,000 people in 2016²; and

WHEREAS, cities are supplying their law enforcement, fire and emergency medical personnel with naloxone to reverse heroin and opioid overdose, which rapidly restores normal respiration to a person who has stopped breathing as a result of overdose; and

WHEREAS, local governments have been aggressively developing policies and programs to address substance abuse disorders in their communities but many lack the necessary resources to mount a comprehensive response to the opioid and heroin epidemic; and

WHEREAS, efforts to reduce the number of opioid and heroin overdoses in our cities require a strong partnership between local, state and federal health and law enforcement programs; and

WHEREAS, Congress passed the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA) of 2016 (Public Law No: 114-198) and the 21st Century Cures Act (Public Law 114-255), which authorizes additional funding for local opioid abuse prevention and education efforts, expands the availability of naloxone to local law enforcement, fire and emergency medical personnel, and supports local prescription opioid and heroin treatment and intervention programs; and

WHEREAS, in FY 2017 and FY 2018 the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) awarded more than \$1 billion in grants – authorized by the CARA and the Cures Act – to states and territories to help combat the opioid epidemic by funding local programs for prevention and treatment to those affected; and

WHEREAS, lack of clarity from Congress and the Administration on how States should use the money has left millions of dollars in federal funding unspent; and

WHEREAS, local governments are best positioned to quickly put the unspent funding and any additional funding that Congress provides for opioid abuse prevention and treatment programs to immediate use;

¹ Cicero, T., Ellis, M., Surratt, H, Kurtz, S. The Changing Face of Heroin Use in the United States: A Retrospective Analysis of the Past 50 Years, July, 2014.

² <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/index.html>

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the National League of Cities (NLC) urges Congress to require States to submit a distribution plan on how they will use unspent FY 2017 and 2018 Cures and CARA funding to local programs for prevention and treatment of substance abuse disorders by the end of FY 2018; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, calls on Congress to include statutory language in future substance abuse disorder funding that would require federal agencies to allocate at least 20 percent of the appropriated funding towards competitive grant funding to local government efforts for prevention and treatment.

