

Midcoast Community Council

*An elected Advisory Council to the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors
representing Montara, Moss Beach, El Granada, Princeton, and Miramar
PO Box 248, Moss Beach, CA 94038-0248 | midcoastcommunitycouncil.org*

Gregg Dieguez | **Claire Toutant** | **Dan Haggerty** | **Scott Bollinger** | **Gus Mattammal**
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Date: June 14, 2023
To: Board of Supervisors; Public Health; Sheriff's Office
CC: Related Staff, SAM Staff and Board
From: Midcoast Community Council
Subject: Request Funding for Wastewater Testing of Fentanyl, other drugs

The Opioid Epidemic has taken a deadly new turn with Fentanyl. Even more deadly in small doses, that drug is appearing in street drugs marketed to our school children - reportedly by other teenagers. Since last December, the MCC has been requesting action on this issue, and we are pleased to see a partial response by the County in recognition of the problem. However, one element of a Public Health strategy is missing: prevalence testing.

The past few months, the Sewer Authority Midcoastside engaged in a pilot wastewater testing program for dangerous substances in wastewater, including Fentanyl. That program is analogous to similar efforts SAM has conducted since Jan. 2022 for COVID and other diseases, and which inform decisions about public health policy. The [MIT-spinoff Biobot](#) provides reports on the findings via interactive web dashboards. The service costs \$250 per test, thus perhaps \$1,000 monthly for weekly testing. There is no long term commitment, and the reporting frequency can be adjusted based on findings.

The GM of SAM presented continuation of the pilot to the SAM Board [on March 27, 2023](#), but HMB voted against funding the program with sewer ratepayer funds. HMB councilors have stated they support the program, but want it funded with County Public Health or law enforcement monies. We believe those funding sources are the appropriate vehicles to continue this important program.

Following the County Board of Supervisors May 30th "Study Session on Fentanyl," the Midcoast Community Council anticipates timely Board action and requests that recommendations for addressing the opioid epidemic in San Mateo County include funding for Wastewater Testing for Dangerous Substances. [Marin County](#), [Tempe, AZ](#), and [other cities](#) nationwide are already [\(e.g Washington Post article - and prior links\)](#) using wastewater testing as part of their public health strategy - as an early warning system.

We would appreciate a decision and a reply on this matter soon, so that the testing program can be resumed.

Sincerely,

s/Gregg Dieguez, Chair