



City of Medical Lake Proclamation

The Gabriel's Challenge 36 Day Awareness Campaign Our Community Response Against Fentanyl

WHEREAS, beginning in the mid to late 1990's prescription drugs triggered the opioid crisis and nationwide there was a silent rise in drug overdose deaths; and

WHEREAS, in recent years, there has been a marked increase in drug overdose deaths spurred by a rise in fentanyl, a cheap and potent synthetic opioid that traffickers mix with other illegal drugs to drive addiction and increase their profits; users are often unaware they are taking fentanyl until it is too late; and

WHEREAS, research from the State Health Data Assistance Center (SHDAC) found the annual number of overdose deaths from any kind of drug in the U.S. has multiplied nearly six times over since 2000, rising from 17,500 to over 106,000 people in 2021, and greater than 80% of those involved some form of opioids, including heroin, prescription painkillers, and, most prevalently in recent years, synthetic opioids such as fentanyl; and

WHEREAS, the public health emergency, first declared under President Trump's leadership in October 2017, due to the consequences of the opioid crisis facing the nation, was set to expire on March 21, 2025; and

WHEREAS, On March 18, 2025, Secretary Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. renewed the public health emergency declaration addressing our nation's continued opioid crisis; and

WHEREAS, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) confirmed overdose remains the leading cause of death among Americans aged 18-44; and

WHEREAS, The Spokane Regional Opioid Task Force (SROTF) website tracked and reported 259 fentanyl deaths in 2024 and 68 to date in 2025, with 66% of those happening in homes; and

WHEREAS, we acknowledge the devastating toll the opioid epidemic has taken on individuals, families, and communities in the Spokane Region; and

WHEREAS, there is scarcely a family in this region who has not been touched by the epidemic of drug, alcohol or opioid addiction and the time has come and is now for mothers, fathers, sisters, and brothers to take action. For too long we have looked to government agencies and non-profit services alone to solve what only the family and entire community can do; and

WHEREAS, this Mayor is calling for unity in the City of Medical Lake across all socio-economic divides to unite for the saving of this generation through love in action. We have everything needed to heal this crisis, but we lack one thing, LOVE!

Selfless LOVE acknowledging recovery is hard and painful work for all involved. Those suffering from addiction need a sense of community and family belonging, to be seen and known. LOVE is not permissive, LOVE guides to a better way and knows where the boundaries lay; and

WHEREAS, Now is time to take action. Now is the time to humble ourselves and pray to our great creator, the creator of heaven and everything in the earth, and call upon him to be merciful, to pardon our iniquity, and create in us a new heart of love and compassion for these, our dying children, a love that compels us to action; and

WHEREAS, Kitara Johnson-Jones lost her son, in a moment of relapse, to fentanyl overdose on March 3, 2025, and is calling on the community at large to join her in the Gabriel's Challenge, a time to come together to solve this drug and fentanyl epidemic in the greater Spokane region.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Terri Cooper, Mayor of the City of Medical Lake, Washington, in recognition of the renewed federal public health emergency declaration addressing our nation's opioid crisis and in support of The Gabriel's Challenge, 36 days of Community Transformation and Awareness of Fentanyl Overdose Deaths impacting families in the Spokane Region, do hereby declare, the period between Mother's Day, Sunday, May 11, 2025 through Father's Day, Sunday, June 15, 2025 as:

**The Gabriel's Challenge – 36 Days of Community Transformation
A Community Response Against Fentanyl**

in Medical Lake, Washington, and encourage all citizens to take the challenge. Citizens are encouraged to adopt a block and get to know your neighbors, to pray, and to challenge themselves to be intentional about connecting with family members, neighbors, and those in the region who are in crisis. Together we can do great things.

Please plan to join others from the Spokane Region on Sunday May 11, 2025, at the Riverfront Park Pavilion from 6:00pm – 7:30pm for the 36 Day Kick-Off Event.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and cause the seal of the City of Medical Lake to be affixed this 5th day of May 2025.


Terri K. Cooper, Mayor

