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INVESTIGATION REVEALS MISMANAGEMENT OF OAKLAND'S CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES

Inadequate oversight and inept management leads to loss of drugs

OAKLAND, Calif. (Feb. 26, 2020): Today, Oakland City Auditor Courtney Ruby released an investigation on Oakland Fire Department's (OFD) Medical Services Division (MSD) management of controlled substances. The investigation was prompted by a whistleblower complaint, received in July 2019, alleging poor oversight of the controlled substances, Fentanyl and Midazolam, including not performing drug counts. The investigation substantiated these claims finding MSD's regulation of controlled substances completely unacceptable and requiring OFD's urgent attention.

Midazolam is a prescription sedative used during minor surgeries that the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) has designated as a "Schedule IV" substance. Fentanyl, a "Schedule II" substance, is a prescription pain reliever that is high-risk for addiction. The illicit sale and widespread abuse of Fentanyl is well-documented. "MSD's mismanagement has demonstrated a bold disregard for the safety of our community and employees. The country is in the midst of an opioid epidemic and our residents, and fellow employees, who work everyday to safeguard the City, deserve better than this," stated Oakland City Auditor Courtney Ruby.

In September 2018, MSD lost 8 vials of Midazolam. While the vials were recovered in February 2019, this investigation highlights that the environment allowing this incident to occur, persists in MSD. In fact, during our investigation, drugs that expired in 2017 were found in a station storage box that were never reported as missing. The investigation was unable to substantiate misuse of controlled substances, however, given the environment, we cannot confirm that misuse did not occur.

Unfortunately, this is not the first time these grave deficiencies in MSD's control over Fentanyl and Midazolam have been called out by the City Auditor. Back in 2018, the City Auditor's Office issued an audit that identified many of the same issues. City Auditor Ruby stated, "While management agreed to implement corrections in 2018, our investigation found no evidence of such corrections, instead, management falsified reports during the investigation stating improvements had been made."

Auditor Ruby noted, "I want to take this opportunity to raise up whistleblowers—it is through their courage that the lax control, inadequate monitoring, and inept management was put on the City Auditor's radar."

To read the full report please click [here](#).

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ABOUT OAKLAND CITY AUDITOR COURTNEY RUBY

City Auditor Courtney A. Ruby, CPA, CFE, was re-elected in November 2018, and took office in January 2019. She previously served as Oakland's City Auditor for eight years, between 2007 and 2014. In 2014, Courtney was recognized by the American Center for Government Auditing as one of the most influential professionals in Government Auditing. In April 2019, an Association of Local Government Auditors peer review team found the Office of the City Auditor met the highest standards in performance auditing. Performance audits of the City's Police Commission and Community Policing Review Agency, Measure D and Q, Oakland Fire Prevention Bureau, Homeless Services, and the City's Financial Condition are in progress. Earlier reports reviewed OPD Overtime, Business Tax Refunds, Limited Public Financing Act for the November 2018 election, and a recommendation follow-up report for the Rent Adjustment Program Audit issued in 2016.

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