

Abstract

In the context of the United States, the opioid epidemic represents one of the most serious health crises in decades, with Philadelphia among the hardest hit cities in the country. This paper focuses on studying the role of local government under Mayor Jim Kenney in addressing the opioid crisis. The thesis uses a combination of content and thematic analysis. The purpose of the research was to answer the questions of what key words associated with the opioid epidemic were used by local government to describe it and how they framed the epidemic in official documents. The most frequently occurring keyword was "community". Based on the frequency of occurrence of the words "opioids," "drugs," and "overdose" in each document, the opioid epidemic did not begin to be written into official documents until 2018, two years into the mayor's tenure, and these keywords rarely appeared in earlier documents. The social and health framework emerged as the most significant. These frameworks emphasized collective responsibility, community support, access to treatment services, and prevention. The criminal justice framework, although less common, focused on the public indirectly affected by the opioid crisis and the overall safety of neighborhoods and streets in the city. The analysis revealed that local government, under the leadership of Jim Kenney, has made significant efforts in strengthening the local community as a key means of addressing the crisis. Local government in Philadelphia has played a multifaceted role in addressing the opioid epidemic by focusing on prevention and community support, providing essential services, adjusting priorities over time, addressing related issues such as homelessness, and taking a balanced approach that includes social, health, and criminal justice considerations.