

Paul A. Allen
San Francisco, CA
August 23, 2024

(via email)

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Re: Narcotics Arrests & Overdose Deaths—Apologies, Corrections & Interpretations

Dear Commissioners:

I wish here to amend my letter of August 21, 2024 and to apologize for my overly robust interpretation of the one year of overdose deaths and arrest data. I have spoken to a statistician who helped me analyze the data and herewith set forth those conclusions:

1. The sample size of 14 (technically “observations”) is so small as to be almost meaningless. In short, we do not have enough to data to conclude anything.
2. In order to show a truly meaningful inverse relationship, one would need a correlation of at least $-.95$ and ideally -1.0 . We do not have that here; therefore, no inverse correlation for dealers or users can be assumed.
3. Neither the positive nor negative coefficients are meaningful.

In short, we cannot conclude anything from the data. Thanks to Commissioner Carter-Oberstone for nudging the process along. Again, I apologize to the Commissioners and take this as a lesson that, among other things, most of what I learned decades ago in my statistics class has been lost.

Sincerely,

Paul A. Allen