Mar 24, 2021

Contact Kylie Mason

Phone 850-245-0150

OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL STATE OF FLORIDA

Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

AG Moody Encourages Student-Led Drug Prevention Programs in Fla. Schools



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody today delivered remarks virtually to highlight student-led drug prevention programs at the Florida Association of District School Superintendents Conference. The opioid crisis continues to ravage Florida, with close to 17 people dying each day due to overdoses. Attorney General Moody is encouraging school superintendents to bolster student-led anti-drug initiatives to raise awareness among young people about the dangers of addiction to prevent addiction and misuse.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “I am thrilled to partner with FADSS in raising awareness about the importance of youth-led activities that promote substance abuse prevention. As a mom, I know how important it is to start taking measures on drug-abuse prevention early and comprehensively. My goal is to showcase effective programs and increase the number of these student-led initiatives to keep kids engaged, both during and after school, in order to decrease the misuse and often fatal effects of the opioid crisis.”

FADSS President Dr. Michael Grego said, “Losing a single student to a drug-related death is one too many. We know that school-based programs play an important role in drug awareness and intervention. Since many of the children most in need of help do not have the required support system at home, providing a safe space for children and young adults to talk about their problems with their friends and peers is crucial to drug prevention.”

FADSS CEO Sen. Bill Montford said, “We all recognize the negative impact that drug addiction can have on our youth and that those at highest risk for becoming addicted to opioids and narcotics are young people age 12-25. We must be mindful that with the added trauma and stress over the past year on both students and their families, intervention support and impactful prevention programs are needed now more than ever before.”

In addition to Attorney General Moody, Florida First Lady Casey DeSantis and four additional speakers gave presentations at the virtual conference—Laura Corbin, Melissa Valido, Natalie Novak and Kristy Keller.

The speakers at the conference represent four student-led drug prevention programs in the state. Laura Corbin oversees Students Working Against Tobacco in Florida for Tobacco Free Florida. Melissa Valido is the state coordinator for Florida’s Students Against Destructive Decisions. Natalie Novak is the prevention coordinator with Drug Free Manatee, which offers a peer mentorship and drug-free program. Finally, Kristy Keller represents Victory Clubs, a new student-led drug-prevention program that is currently being rolled out nationwide.

In 2017, the Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration reported that more than 50% of youth, ages 12 to 17, who reported using drugs stated that the prescription drugs most recently misused were obtained from a friend or relative. SAMHSA has also reported there is strong scientific evidence supporting the effectiveness of prevention programs.

Per the most recent medical examiner’s report, 38 youths died in 2019 due to drug overdose—27 of whom died specifically from an opioid-related overdose.

Fighting the opioid epidemic in Florida is one of Attorney General Moody’s top priorities. Attorney General Moody served as chair of the Statewide Task Force on Opioid Abuse. The task force recommended that the statewide prevention strategy should incorporate support and expansion of youth coalitions, representing communities across Florida.

To read the STFOA Final Report, click here.

In September 2019, Attorney General Moody launched Dose of Reality Florida, a website for Floridians to easily access vital information and resources about opioid misuse and addiction. The website can be accessed at DoseofRealityFL.com.