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Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

AG Moody Kicks Off Statewide Task Force on Opioid Abuse Meeting in Manatee County



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody, Chair of the Statewide Task Force on Opioid Abuse, today convened the Task Force's second meeting of 2020 in Bradenton. The meeting focused on prevention efforts that could help end the opioid crisis claiming an estimated 15 lives in Florida each day. The Task Force heard from United States Representative Vern Buchanan, several state agencies and community organizations during the meeting.
Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "Prevention is such a vital component in the fight to end the opioid crisis in Florida and save lives. We lose 15 people every day to opioid abuse and that is why the work of our Statewide Task Force is so important. I want to thank Congressman Buchanan for joining us today, and for his commitment to fighting drug abuse through his work in our nation's capital. I look forward to continuing to partner with local, state and federal authorities to advance this important mission and save lives."

U.S. Representative Vern Buchanan said, "For too long, fentanyl and other opioids have wreaked havoc on communities in Florida and across the country. We need to continue our efforts to fight opioids. I thank the Attorney General for leading the state's efforts on this issue and I look forward to learning more about what we can do together at the state and federal level to address this issue."

Task Force members first heard from representatives of the Florida Department of Education, who described the new educational requirements for school districts on teaching how to spot and report substance abuse. Task Force members then listened to a presentation from the Florida Department of Health on the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program and current prescribing trends. Following that, the Executive Director of the Community Coalition Alliance gave a report to the group on how building community coalitions plays a major role in raising awareness and promoting prevention. After, a representative from Ernst & Young spoke about a new predictive analytics program capable of identifying individuals with high-risk of addiction for early intervention. Finally, the Task Force heard from a professor of medicine on the Maternal Opioid Recovery Effort, an awareness and prevention initiative for providing information and resources for pregnant women about the dangers of opioid abuse.

Today's meeting is the fifth meeting of the SWTFOA. Below is a list of the previous meetings:

- - Inaugural meeting in Tallahassee, October 2019;
  - Second meeting in Pasco County, November 2019;
  - Third meeting in Miami, December 2019; and
  - Fourth meeting at the Seminole County Sheriff's Office, January 2020.

The Task Force is charged with developing a statewide strategy to identify best practices to combat the opioid epidemic through education, law enforcement efforts, treatment, prevention and recovery. The Task Force will then present its findings to Governor Ron DeSantis, Senate President Bill Galvano and House Speaker Jose Oliva.