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Contact Kylie Mason

Phone 850-245-0150

OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL STATE OF FLORIDA

Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

AG Moody Pushes Back Against CDC Opioid Guidelines

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody today pushed back against a dangerous federal proposal to loosen opioid prescribing guidelines. Attorney General Moody and 38 other attorneys general are expressing concerns about a U.S. Department of Health and Human Services pain management draft report. The Pain Management Best Practices Inter-Agency Task Force Draft Report deviates from strict guidelines published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that were intended to decrease the risk of opioid misuse. The report suggests medical providers should rely on personal judgment instead of consulting evidence-based recommendations, including opioid prescription duration and dosage.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “It is inconceivable that anyone would recommend making it easier to access opioids when it is so evident that our country is going through a raging opioid crisis. In Florida alone, we are losing 17 people a day to opioid abuse. Moving away from these guidelines during this critical time could destroy any progress made and would only feed this deadly epidemic. Not only does this report ludicrously suggest loosening these restrictions, it does not even provide a reason for departing from these evidence-based guidelines.”

The Attorneys General sent the letter to the chief medical officer for the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health and urges HHS to revise the draft report. The draft report suggests moving away from key components of the CDC Guideline for Prescribing Opioids for Chronic Pain put in place in 2016. However, constraints against higher doses of opioids, longer durations of prescriptions and concurrent prescriptions of opioids and benzodiazepines must continue. For example, the overdose rate for patients prescribed both opioids and benzodiazepines at the same time is 10 times higher than being prescribed just opioids. The CDC guidelines appropriately warn of this co-prescribing and the draft report must be revised to concur with this notice.

Attorney General Moody has made fighting the opioid epidemic one of her top priorities. Before entering office this year, Attorney General Moody began working on an Opioid Abuse Working Group to gather information and best practices from across the state to combat the opioid epidemic. The group has since released a final report for recommendations, which lays a foundation to build on strategies for a Statewide Task Force on Opioid Abuse. Attorney General Moody is currently working with the Florida Legislature to establish this task force this session. If the legislation is passed and the task force is created, it will provide a formulized structure to look at best practices to fight this epidemic.

To view a copy of the letter, click here.