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Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

AG's Opioid Working Group Releases Final Report

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody's Opioid Abuse Working Group today released its final report, highlighting recommendations and best practices for fighting the opioid crisis in Florida. Attorney General Moody launched the working group her first week in office and selected Seminole County Sheriff Dennis Lemma to chair the team of experts from across the state.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "I want to thank Sheriff Lemma and each member of our working group for their tireless efforts to produce this important report in time for Florida's Legislative Session. Some of these recommendations and best practices can begin to be implemented now while we continue to build on the foundation outlined in this report. To ensure progress continues, I will work closely with lawmakers this session on the creation of a statewide task force to fully prepare and equip Florida to win the fight against this crisis claiming 17 lives a day in our state."

Sheriff Dennis Lemma said, "I want to thank Attorney General Moody for her quick action to bring together this group of experts to identify ways to combat the opioid crisis. This report is the result of nearly two months of dogged efforts by experts in the group, but there is so much more research to conduct and work ahead if we are going to eliminate the opioid problems in our communities. Florida needs an opioid task force, and I fully support Attorney General Moody's efforts to pass legislation to create this statewide team and end this public health emergency."

The group's final report primarily focuses on improvements in three areas: prevention and education; enforcement; and treatment and recovery. Some of the recommended improvements include:

· Allowing non-sworn civilian personnel employed by a law enforcement agency to carry and administer emergency opioid antagonists, such as Naloxone and Narcan;
· Increasing penalties against drug dealers who operate within 1,000 feet of a substance abuse facility;
· Creating partnerships between law enforcement and social service providers to offer wrap-around services for people struggling with addiction;
· Creating a real-time dashboard system to serve as a statewide collection point of data including medical examiners reports, overdose death rates, overdose locations, DEA seizure data and other important opioid-related information;
· Implementing comprehensive drug prevention and education programs for school-aged children;
· Increasing the number of Drug Take Back days and prescription drop-off locations for people to safely dispose of unwanted prescription opioids;

· Expanding pre-arrest diversion programs and drug courts to include misdemeanants;
· Developing specialized caseloads and training for probation staff to focus on supervising those addicted to controlled substances;
· Utilizing screening tools in primary care centers, hospitals and school settings to provide early intervention; and
· Expanding both residential treatment and medication-assisted treatment programs throughout the state.

To read the full report, Florida's Opioid Epidemic: Recommendations and Best Practices, click here.