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OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL STATE OF FLORIDA

Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

AG Moody Announces Opioid Abuse Work Group



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody today, in her first week, named 18 experts and community leaders to serve on her Opioid Abuse Working Group, including previously named Chair, Sheriff Dennis Lemma. The Group will gather information and best practices from across Florida to help General Moody combat the opioid epidemic.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “As Attorney General, one of my top priorities is to combat the opioid epidemic. Therefore, one of my first actions in my role is to announce these experts from across the state who will find solutions to fight this crisis. These individuals care deeply about the safety of all Floridians and will strive to find the best answers. Florida must be a leader in fighting this national epidemic and I am confident my Opioid Abuse Working Group will help us make a difference.”

The members include:

Chair, Sheriff Dennis Lemma, Seminole County

Sheriff Dennis Lemma serves as Chair for the working group. With more than 26 years of experience in law enforcement, Sheriff Lemma has dedicated his career to fighting drug abuse and arresting drug traffickers. Sheriff Lemma earned a bachelor’s degree in Criminal Justice Administration from Columbia College, a master’s degree in Administrative Leadership from the University of Oklahoma, and is a graduate of the Federal Bureau of Investigation National Academy in Quantico, Virginia. He also attended the Florida Department of Law Enforcement’s Chief Executive Institute and served in the United States Marine Corps.

State Attorney David Aronberg

David Aronberg serves as the State Attorney for the 15th Judicial Circuit covering all of Palm Beach County. He formerly served as an Assistant Attorney General and was a Florida Senator. In 2016 he created a Sober Homes Task Force which has led to new Florida laws and regulations to combat patient brokering and insurance fraud.

Steve Collins

Steve Collins is the Director of central Florida High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA). Following a tenured career in law enforcement, Mr. Collins now leads strategic efforts to identify and dismantle drug trafficking operations in the central Florida area and abroad.

James Dicks

James Dicks served proudly in the U.S. Marine Corps and is the current Florida Chairman of the Department of Defense Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) and part of Defense Personnel and Family Support Center (DPFSC). Addiction issues involving veterans and opioids are becoming more common. His role as State Chair allows him to spend much of his time transitioning veterans and offering resources and support to the veterans and their families who may be affected.

Rachel Docekal, MBA, ED.D

Rachel Docekal is a seasoned leader with specialized knowledge in for-profit and nonprofit sectors including serving as an executive committee member on the Criminal Justice Commission. She previously served as the CEO for Hanley Foundation whose mission is to provide substance abuse prevention and education programs for parents, caregivers, and school-age children.

Sheriff Tommy Ford, Bay County

While being Sheriff of Bay County, Ford has implemented Medication Assisted Treatment through his jail which conducts vivitrol treatments to those who are about to be released and continued to engage with those individuals after release to help with life management and addiction. He is also proud of their Mission Based Resilience program which focuses on mental, spiritual, and emotional health of inmates suffering from addiction to teach them how to create more resilience in life.

Andy Gardiner

Andy Gardiner is the Senior Vice President of External Affairs and Community Relations with Orlando Health, a not-for-profit healthcare organization with hospitals and physician practices across Central Florida. Mr. Gardiner oversees strategy for the organization’s involvement in the community including drug recovery and reaching vulnerable citizens, working directly to combat the opioid epidemic. Previously, Gardiner served as a member of the Florida State Senate where he served as President of the Senate for 2015-2016.

Stacy Gromatski

Stacy Gromatski is the President and CEO of the Florida Network of Youth and Family Services, where she has served since 2010. Gromatski has worked to enhance the lives of runaway, homeless, and troubled youth and their families as well as seek data-driven and cost-effective strategies to reform the criminal justice system for Florida's youth.

Councilman William Gulliford

Council Member William Gulliford has served on the Jacksonville city council since 2011. He chaired the city of Jacksonville Opioid Epidemic Special committee and is a tenured leader and advocate for the citizens he serves.

Julie Chaikin Hogan

Julie Chaikin Hogan has been with the Florida Attorney General's Office of Statewide Prosecution for the last 19 years. She is currently the Deputy Statewide Prosecutor for the Office of Statewide Prosecution. Her efforts over the last several years have been focused in working on prosecutorial strategies to combat the opioid epidemic including prosecuting organized fraud schemes, racketeering related crimes and multi-jurisdictional narcotics and money laundering cases.

Samantha Kolb

Samantha Kolb is the Director of Addiction Center in Florida for Centerstone who specialized in mental health, addiction, and counseling needs. Kolb is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker with nearly 10 years of experience in behavioral health. She specializes in addictions treatment and currently manages the Adult Addiction Continuum.

Al Lamberti

Former Sheriff Al Lamberti (Ret.) currently serves as the Florida Law Enforcement Coordinator for the Regional Organized Crime Information Center (ROCIC). He is a 35-year veteran of the Broward County Sheriff's Office and also led a comprehensive strategy to combat the opioid epidemic in South Florida.

Shannon MacGillis

Shannon MacGillis is a Special Counsel to the Office of Statewide Prosecution within Florida Attorney General's Office. She has served as an Assistant State Attorney and then an Assistant Statewide Prosecutor and for the past 10 years she has been assigned to the North Florida High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) in Jacksonville, Florida, where she is the Prosecutorial Initiative /Cash Asset Seizure Team Commander. MacGillis has specialized in drug prosecutions for over fifteen years, with the last 6 years specializing in emerging synthetic drugs and analog prosecutions in Florida.

Interim Chief Mary Olsen, Delray Beach PD

Interim Chief Mary Olsen was born and raised in West Palm Beach. She became a police officer in October 1984 and has worked in several areas of the department, including patrol, organized crime, criminal investigations and community policing. Now, she serves as Interim chief. The Delray Beach PD has been very successful with their three-prong approach to the opioid crisis: Education, Enforcement, and Life Safety. Delray Beach PD was the first agency in Palm Beach County and second in the state to supply its officers with Narcan.

Dionne Polite

Dionne Polite is the Manager for State Operations in Florida for AARP. Americans over 50 are using narcotic pain pills in surprisingly high numbers, and many are becoming addicted. Ms. Polite is responsible for managing the AARP Florida team that is focused on statewide outreach and community education efforts.

Dr. Teresa Rawe, DO

Dr. Rawe is the Emergency Department Medical Director of TeamHealth, located in Bradenton. She is affiliated with Manatee Memorial Hospital which has implemented a new method, Alternatives to Opioids (ALTO), which aims to cut down on the prescription of opioids by seeking other routes of pain management. She was recently awarded the Champion of Prevention – Healthcare Award for her work on substance abuse prevention.

Dr. Mark Rubenstein, M.D., P.A.

Dr. Mark Rubenstein is a practicing Pain Management Doctor in Jupiter, Florida and is affiliated with multiple hospitals in the area, including Good Samaritan Medical Center and Jupiter Medical Center. He received his medical degree from State University of New York Upstate Medical University and has been in practice for more than 20 years. Dr. Rubenstein has additionally worked diligently with the Florida Medical Association on various legislative activities including pain medicine prescribing, allied health care over reach, and the opioid/heroin crisis.

Laurie Serra

Laurie Serra, along with her husband Mark, are co-founders of Narcotics Overdose Prevention Education (NOPE) of Pinellas County. Having lost their oldest son, Matthew, to prescription drug abuse in 2008, Laurie has worked diligently to educate both students and the community on the dangers and consequences of drug use, reaching over 200,000 kids in Pinellas County.

To reach out to the Opioid Working Group please contact Erica Geiger, Director of Special Projects & Initiatives for the Attorney General's Office at Erica.Geiger@myfloridalegal.com.