Date April 29, 2022

Attorney General Moody's Week In Review - April 29, 2022



Florida is now experiencing an influx of new synthetic drugs—some even more powerful than fentanyl.
This week, I filed an emergency rule to outlaw eight synthetic opioids known as nitazenes, adding these dangerous drugs to the state's Schedule I controlled substances list. This means possessing or selling them in Florida is now a felony, punishable by time in prison.

I hope this sends a strong message to drug dealers, that we will not allow them to poison Floridians.

While we do not know yet exactly how prevalent nitazenes have become in the illicit drug market, we do know that Florida law enforcement has identified more than 260 cases involving these substances since 2020—including more than 80 so far this year.

Nitazenes have also been linked to at least 15 deaths in our state. The scariest thing about these drugs is that users often have no idea they are taking them.

Like fentanyl, nitazenes are being mixed with other, more common drugs and sold to unsuspecting users—often with deadly consequences.

It was vital that we took swift, decisive action to outlaw these dangerous substances, before they could become a larger part of the illicit drug supply and increase overdoses in Florida.

It is also important that we reach out to people struggling with addiction and let them know that there is help out there. You can find more information and tools through our comprehensive, statewide resource, DoseOfRealityFL.com.

Stay safe, Florida.



In The News

Florida Attorney General Ashley Moody targets synthetic drugs, Action News Jax

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Florida AG Issues Emergency Rule Outlawing Eight Deadly Synthetic Opioids, WQCS Treasure Coast

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Florida's attorney general issues an emergency rule banning certain synthetic drugs, WFSU Public Media

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Law enforcement officials urging residents to take advantage of National Prescription Take Back Day, ABC 20 Gainesville

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Protecting Floridians

Attorney General Moody Urges Congress to Support Benefits for Public Safety Officers, Families Affected by Work-Related PTSD



Attorney General Ashley Moody is urging Congress to pass the Public Safety Officer Support Act of 2022. The legislation addresses gaps in support for public safety officers who suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder associated with the high-risk nature of their jobs.

Attorney General Moody, joined by 52 other attorneys general, sent a letter to Congress that praises the work of public safety officers, including police, firefighters and emergency medical technicians, who respond to stressful and potentially traumatic situations. Compared to the general public, public safety officers are 25.6 times more likely to develop PTSD. Research shows those suffering from PTSD are at increased risk of suicide.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “Not all scars suffered while serving the public are visible, and sometimes it’s the invisible scars that take the longest to heal. Law enforcement officers suffer these mental scars in service to us, so the least we can do is support them in the healing process. That is why I am supporting the Public Safety Officer Support Act of 2022 and encouraging Congress to also support this necessary piece of legislation.” Read More

Attorney General Moody Honors Victim Advocates and Law Enforcement During National Crime Victims' Rights Week



Attorney General Ashley Moody honored victim advocates and law enforcement officers during the 2021 Distinguished Victim Services Awards ceremony as part of National Crime Victims' Rights Week. Every year, the Florida Attorney General's Office recognizes victim advocates and law enforcement officers who go above and beyond the call of duty to assist crime victims.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "Victim advocates and law enforcement officers provide life-changing support and services to those in need. They help victims through their darkest hours and sacrifice so much time and energy to help people heal and recover. I am honored to present a few of these great public servants with our Distinguished Victim Services Award for their outstanding work over the past year." Read More

Attorney General Moody Challenges President Biden's Unlawful, Fast-Track Asylum System



Attorney

General Ashley Moody, along with a coalition of 13 other states, is taking legal action against the Biden administration over yet another unlawful immigration rule. Attorney General Moody is challenging the Asylum Rule, which largely removes federal immigration judges from the asylum review process, and instead gives officers within the Department of Homeland Security unprecedented authority. The new policy not only violates federal laws and bypasses Congress, but also drastically erodes asylum integrity safeguards.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “Joe Biden continues his assault on common sense immigration policies with this push to eliminate a crucial safeguard in the asylum-seeking process—making it substantially easier for unauthorized, unvetted migrants to enter the country. I’m taking action, with 13 of my fellow attorneys general, to stop this disastrous plan.” Read More

Attorney General Moody Announces Arrest of Behavior Analyst for Defrauding Medicaid



Attorney General Ashley Moody's Medicaid Fraud Control Unit announced the arrest of an Indian River County resident for Medicaid fraud. Michael Jacob Rothman worked for a home health care agency and provided behavior analyst services to three Medicaid recipients, all three with disabilities and two being children. Rothman submitted timesheets for services never provided, stealing nearly $12,000 from the Medicaid program.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "Falsifying timesheets to receive thousands of dollars from Medicaid jeopardizes the integrity of the healthcare program and ultimately harms taxpayers. I'm proud of my Medicaid Fraud Control Unit for stopping this fraudulent scheme and ensuring the suspect charged with stealing thousands of taxpayer dollars faces justice." Read More

Attorney General Moody Announces Arrest of Ineligible Medicaid Provider for Defrauding Medicaid of More Than $68,000



Attorney General Ashley Moody’s Medicaid Fraud Control Unit and the Hernando County Sheriff’s Office arrested an ineligible Medicaid provider for defrauding Medicaid of more than $68,000. In applying to become a Medicaid provider, Jose Troche failed to disclose former felony convictions that precluded Medicaid from accepting the application. Due to the false statement, Troche received the funds from Medicaid.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “This suspect willingly falsified his application to become a Medicaid provider and fraudulently received more than $68,000 from the taxpayer funded program. Deceiving Medicaid for the payout is not only wrong, it’s unlawful, and thanks to the efforts by members of my Medicaid Fraud Control Unit, this man will face justice for his crime.”

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Events

This week, Attorney General Ashley Moody hosted the 2021 Distinguished Victim Services Awards ceremony at the Florida Capitol, honoring outstanding law enforcement officers and victim advocates going beyond the call of duty to assist crime victims.





Attorney General Moody speaking at the Florida Sheriff’s Association Commanders Academy in Tallahassee.



Attorney General Moody presenting the White Hat Award to Assistant Attorney General of Criminal Appeals Heather Ross. The White Hat Award is given to Office of the Attorney General staff members who demonstrate extraordinary effort and skill in fulfilling the mission of the office. Ross has served Floridians through her role in the Attorney General's Office for more than 15 years and has gone above and beyond her role, both in the courtroom and the office.

