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Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

AG Moody Advances Fight to End Opioid Epidemic Amid COVID-19



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—The COVID-19 pandemic has changed daily routines around the world, but it hasn't lessened Attorney General Ashley Moody's resolve to end the deadly opioid crisis plaguing Florida. Even as the novel coronavirus spreads, Attorney General Moody continues efforts to curb the national opioid crisis claiming lives in Florida—issuing statewide recommendations to address the opioid crisis, creating new partnerships to help Floridians struggling with substance abuse and crafting criminal justice training to assist prosecutors in shutting down the sham sober home industry.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "Our nation and our state face many challenges, but be assured that nothing will dampen my resolve to put an end to the national opioid crisis that continues to claim lives in our great state. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic struck Florida, we were working hard to stop opioid misuse and save lives, and as we continue to work together to stop the spread of COVID-19, please know that our fight against the deadly opioid crisis has not abated.

"There are signs that the pandemic may be contributing to an increase in opioid deaths, and that is even more reason why we cannot waiver in our fight to stop drug abuse—and why I will continue to work every day, on the local, state and national level, to end this deadly crisis affecting Florida families."

Attorney General Moody began working to stop the crisis even before taking office in 2019. Recent efforts, amid the COVID-19 pandemic, include:

- As Chair of the Statewide Task Force on Opioid Abuse, Attorney General Moody and members of the team completed and issued the Task Force's report of findings and recommendations;
- Continuing to enhance and update the Attorney General's statewide resource DoseOfRealityFL.com with information to help Floridians struggling with addiction;
- Securing a new partnership with 211 to help better connect Floridians with local substance abuse treatment and counseling services; and
- Creating and distributing a new virtual training tool to assist prosecutors in shutting down the sham sober home industry.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Attorney General Moody's efforts included:

- Assembling a statewide [working group of experts](#) to identify strategies and best practices for addressing the opioid crisis;
- Issuing a strategic report for combating the national opioid crisis impacting the lives of Florida families;
- [Personally appearing in court and advocating for expediency](#) in the state's opioid litigation to hold responsible the nation's largest opioid distributors, manufacturers and pharmacies;
- Securing a [successful ruling](#) denying the defendants' motions to dismiss the state's opioid litigation; and
- Pushing back against the loosening of opioid prescribing guidelines by requesting that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [reverse a recommendation that medical providers rely on personal judgment](#) instead of consulting evidence-based recommendations, including opioid prescription duration and dosage.

[Provisional data](#) from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention include 70,980 fatal overdoses in 2019, with about 1,000 more deaths to likely be added, marking a 4.8% increase from the year before. The data indicates the U.S. last year likely eclipsed the prior record high of 70,237 overdose deaths set in 2017—and that the pandemic could exacerbate the opioid crisis.

In August, Attorney General Moody sponsored a cabinet resolution declaring Aug. 31, International Overdose Awareness Day. To view the resolution, click [here](#).