

TREASURE COAST REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL

MEMORANDUM

To: Council Members

AGENDA ITEM 9

From: Staff

Date: March 17, 2017 Council Meeting

Subject: Opioid Epidemic Update – Presentation by Alan S. Johnson, Chief Assistant State Attorney for the 15th Judicial Circuit

Introduction

Chief Assistant State Attorney for the 15th Judicial Circuit, Alan S. Johnson has been invited to update Council on its latest activities in response to the sober home problem and the opioid epidemic. Through 2016 there were an estimated 4,686 opioid-related, fire-rescue emergency responses in the four-county Treasure Coast Region. Around 4,000 of these occurred in Palm Beach County. In 2016, the opioid-related overdose events have resulted in more than 550 deaths across the Treasure Coast Region. Since 2014, the number of opioid-related overdose response events and deaths in the Treasure Coast Region have increased by 380 percent and 265 percent, respectively.

The estimated cost in the region per response to overdose events ranges from \$1,000 to \$1,800. For 2016, the annual expense for these response calls in the region is now estimated to be between \$5-6 million. There are other public costs as well, including the psychological toll on the region's community of first responders. In Palm Beach County, police and fire departments are routinely engaging mental health professionals to assist first responders in coping with the fatigue and stress associated with responding to so many overdose-related calls and deaths. National facts and figures related to the opioid crisis are attached.

In addition, Florida's recovery industry is now estimated at over \$1 billion, with hundreds of rehab facilities and sober homes within the Treasure Coast Region. Illegal kickbacks, insurance fraud and patient brokering are among the abuses within the industry. All of this fuels the growth of sober homes, some of them being operated by unscrupulous individuals who encourage drug use and other illegal activity. As a result, otherwise peaceful residential neighborhoods are degraded, public safety is endangered and the recovering addicts themselves are victimized, left homeless and risk death by overdose.

Recommendation

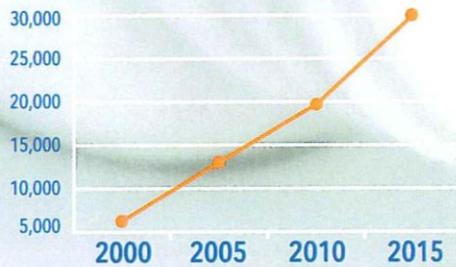
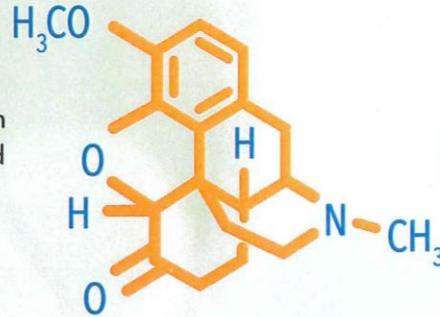
For information only.

Attachments

Fact and Figures on the Opioid Crisis

WHAT IS AN OPIOID?

As used in this report, opioid refers broadly to substances that bind to opioid receptors in the brain and body. This includes drugs commonly prescribed to relieve pain like hydrocodone (e.g., Vicodin) and oxycodone (e.g., OxyContin, Percocet), as well as substances like heroin that are produced and sold illicitly.



THE SCALE OF THE CRISIS

In 2014, the latest year for which national data is available, nearly 30,000 individuals died from opioid overdose in the U.S. This number increased steadily during the last two decades, from 6,242 deaths in 2000, to 12,991 in 2005, and 19,687 in 2010.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

In 1991, health professionals wrote **76 MILLION** opioid prescriptions in the U.S.



In 2011, they wrote **219 MILLION.**



In **12 STATES**, the number of prescriptions written for painkillers exceeded the number of people in the state.

Meanwhile, Mexican heroin production increased from

8 METRIC TONS

TO 50 METRIC TONS
between 2005 and 2009.

Source: National Institute on Drug Abuse



OVERALL, AMERICANS CONSUME UP TO 80% OF THE WORLD'S PRESCRIPTION OPIOIDS.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



On an average day in the U.S., according to the Department of Health and Human Services, health care professionals dispense more than

650,000 OPIOID PRESCRIPTIONS.



EACH DAY:

3,900

People initiate nonmedical use of prescription opioids for the first time.



580

People use heroin for the first time.

78

People die from an opioid-related overdose.

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services