



# Statewide Council on Opioid Abatement

## Council Members

Attorney General James  
Uthmeier  
Chair

Sheriff Dennis M. Lemma  
Delegate Chair

Secretary Taylor Hatch  
Vice Chair

Amy Ronshausen  
Governor's Appointee

Major Todd M. Shear  
Senate President's  
Appointee

Sheriff Robert A. Hardwick  
Office of the Speaker's  
Appointee

Commissioner Chris  
Dougherty  
Florida Association of  
Counties Appointee

Commissioner Lee  
Constantine  
Florida Association of  
Counties Appointee

Mayor Keith James  
Florida Association of  
Counties Appointee

Council Member Josh Fuller  
Florida League of Cities  
Appointee

Vice Mayor Jolien Caraballo  
Florida League of Cities  
Appointee

## In-Person Meeting Minutes September 5, 2025 9:00 A.M. – 11:00 A.M. EST

### Welcome/Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 AM by Delegate Chair, Sheriff Dennis M. Lemma. Roll call was taken by Aaron Platt.

### Attendance Summary

Sheriff Dennis M. Lemma, Delegate Chair  
Secretary Taylor Hatch, Vice Chair  
Major Todd Shear, President's Appointee  
Sheriff Robert Hardwick, Office of the Speaker's Appointee  
Commissioner Chris Dougherty, Florida Association of Counties  
Commissioner Lee Constantine, Florida Association of Counties  
Mayor Keith James, Florida League of Cities Appointee  
Council Member Josh Fuller, Florida League of Cities Appointee  
Vice Mayor Jolien Caraballo, Florida League of Cities Appointee

### Roll Call and Approval of May 7, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Roll call was taken by Aaron Platt. Quorum was met. A motion was entered to approve the May 7, 2025 meeting minutes. The meeting minutes were approved with no opposition.

Motion: Sheriff Robert Hardwick

Second: Major Todd Shear

### Keynote: Opioid State of the State

Dr. Mark Stavros, M.D. Florida State University-College of Medicine presented on Confronting the Opioid Epidemic: Trends, Impacts, and Pathways to Recovery in Florida and the U.S. Dr. Stavros presented information to the Council regarding the drivers of the opioid crisis, national trends, data on overdoses and deaths resulting from overdose. Included in the presentation were data specific to the state of Florida regarding prescriptions for opioid naloxone administration, Emergency Department data and access to treatment. Dr. Stavros also discussed key drivers of opioid abatement which includes increased access to medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD), increased naloxone distribution, education, interdiction, housing and support services, behavioral health services and transportation.

Chair Delegate Sheriff Lemma proposes the empowerment of the patient-doctor relationship in all three forms of the MOUD. Chair Lemma also suggested coordinating a meeting between all independent state councils making decisions and recommendations on opioid settlement funds together for a collaboration summit.

Vice Chair Secretary Taylor Hatch proposes the Department of Children and Families (DCF) in conjunction with the Council on Opioid Abatement and the Department of Health (DOH) explore additional opportunities for ensuring critical information is available to those serving and treating citizens including doctors, schools, etc. The Facts Your Future was mentioned as an example.

Other possibilities discussed for assisting with abating the Opioid crisis include, housing support, transportation to treatment, expanding the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program past



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two years, opioid training in school curriculum, and examining what other states are doing differently that is working

### **Embedding First Responder Resilience and Readiness in the Opioid Abatement Framework**

Dr. Kellie O'Dare, Deputy Executive Director-UCF Restores provided an in-depth review of the program which focuses on clinical research and treatment, specializing in first responders and veterans. The UCF Restores program provides evidence-based treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder and other mental health challenges, while training peer support specialists and a proficient mental health workforce for first responders. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Alarm Project @ UCF Restores focuses on enhancing the behavioral health and resilience of first responders through comprehensive programs and innovative resources tailored to the unique needs of the public safety community. Dr. O'Dare discussed trends in mental health and substance use disorder within the first responder profession noting studies have revealed a high prevalence of psychological strain among EMS, law enforcement and fire service personnel who respond to opioid related incidents.

Council Members discussed the impact the opioid crisis has had on first responders across the state of Florida.

### **Review and Discussion of the 2025 Statewide Council on Opioid Abatement Report Recommendations**

William Hardin, Deputy Assistant Secretary for DCF-Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health reviewed the Statewide Council on Opioid Abatement Draft 2025 Annual Report Recommendations which are required to be published by December 1, 2025. There are twelve draft recommendations that center on county sustainability plans, the use of opioid settlement funds, awareness campaigns, access to naloxone, human trafficking survivors, prenatal opioid screenings, resources for parents of opioid exposed children, data sharing agreements to maximize the use of surveillance data, the peer recovery workforce, access to residential treatment services for women, evidenced-based jail re-entry programs and, stable housing for families receiving treatment or recovery support services.

Chair Delegate Sheriff Lemma requested that references to MAT be changed to MOUD to reflect current practices and terminology. Chair Lemma also suggest adding recommendations for trauma informed care.

The Council unanimously approved the report through a motion from Council member Sheriff Robert Hardwick, which was seconded by Council member Vice Mayor Jolien Caraballo.

### **Public Comment**

Lynette Serlo, Generation O, expressed her support for the work of the Council and the draft recommendations put forth. Ms. Serlo also advocated for additional focus on children born with prenatal opioid exposure.

Neal McGarry, CEO Florida Certification Board expressed his support for the draft recommendations

### **Closing Remarks**

Sheriff Lemma provided closing remarks, thanking Attorney General James Uthmeier for his leadership. The meeting adjourned at approximately 11:15 AM.