



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

Commissioner Lee Constantine
Florida Association of Counties

Commissioner Kathleen Peters
Florida Association of Counties

Vacant
Florida League of Cities Appointee

Vice Mayor Jolien Caraballo
Florida League of Cities Appointee

Statewide Council on Opioid Abatement

Virtual Meeting Minutes

May 7, 2025

2:00 P.M. – 3:30 P.M. EST

Welcome/Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 PM by Delegate Chair, Sheriff M. Lemma. Roll call was taken by LaDarius Gammage.

Attendance Summary

Sheriff Lemma, Delegate Chair

Secretary Taylor Hatch, Vice Chair

Amy Ronshausen, Governor's Appointee

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

Commissioner Kathleen Peters, Florida Association of Counties

Opening Remarks

Sheriff Dennis Lemma opened the May 7, 2025, meeting by welcoming council members and expressing appreciation on behalf of Attorney General James Othmeier. Recent data was shared showing reductions in opioid-related deaths (11%) and non-fatal emergency department visits (16%) in 2023.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

A motion passed to approve minutes from the March 11, 2025, meeting.

Motion: Major Todd Shear

Second: Amy Ronshausen

Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome and Opioid Use Disorder

Lenette Serlo, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Generation O, a national organization for prenatal opioid-exposed children, highlighted long-term developmental and behavioral effects on children and emphasized the lack of pediatrician awareness and peer support. Initiatives to combat prenatal opioid exposure were proposed by Ms. Serlo and included: caregiver education, peer mentor programs, an opioid-exposed child summit and a 10% pledge of settlement funds for child-specific services. Ms. Serlo also recommended the State of Florida fund therapy access via a preloaded healthcare spending card for exposed children. Council Member Shear endorsed increased funding for prenatally exposed children.

Council Member Secretary Hatch supports increasing partnership with the Department of Health, specifically with regard to pediatrician awareness. She also supports increased collaborations with the Agency for Healthcare Administration, hospitals, the Agency for Persons with Disabilities and the newly established HOPE Navigators with the Department of Education.

Early Childhood Court

Dr. Mimi Graham, Director of the Florida State University Center for Prevention and Early Intervention Policy presented on the Early Childhood Court Program. The Early Childhood Court Program serves children 0-3 years of age in the child welfare system due to substance exposure. The program incorporates trauma-informed judges, therapists and mentors. Thus far



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results have indicated higher reunification rates, accelerated permanency and lower recidivism rates. Dr. Graham recommends that the State of Florida dedicates opioid abatement funding to expand the Early Childhood Court Program.

Jail-based Medication Assisted Treatment

Dr. Laura Bedard, Chief of Corrections for the Seminole County Sheriff's Office presented on the Jail-Based Medication Assisted Treatment Program and the Residential Drug Treatment Program at the John E. Polk Correctional Facility in Seminole County. The correctional facility is the first jail in Florida to offer Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT). Dr. Bedrad discussed key elements of Seminole County's MAT program including the MAT Committee, a weekly multidisciplinary committee that meets to review the inmate's progress and the residential treatment program, Accepting Change Through Treatment (ACTT) program which focuses on three levels of intervention: prevention, education and treatment. Another key element of the Seminole County program is coordinating with community-based care agencies to ensure continuity of care for inmates upon their release.

Council Member Comments

Council Member Constantine shared that he is a member of the National Opioid Task Force. The Task Force's National meeting was held recently in Washington DC in which 16 counties were recognized for their efforts in fighting the opioid epidemic. Council Member Constantine offered to share this information with this Council.

Council Member Dougherty acknowledged the work of the Bradford County Paramedicine Program and suggested the program present to the Statewide Council on Opioid Abatement.

Council Delegate Chair Lemma suggest the Council hosts an in-person Opioid Summit complete with speakers and presentations.

Public Comment

Rihanna Giannico, Pasco County Support Services: Ms. Giannico's department manages the opioid settlement funds for Pasco County. She thanked the Council and other organizations for advocating on behalf of the victims of the opioid epidemic.

Closing Remarks

Sheriff Lemma provided closing remarks and thanked council members, presenters and community partners for their participation. The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:25 PM.