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STATE OF FLORIDA DEPLOYS TOOLS TO ADDRESS OVERDOSE CRISIS



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Tallahassee, Fla.— Today, Last week, First Lady Casey DeSantis brought together the Florida Department of Children and Families Secretary Shevaun Harris, State Surgeon General Dr. Joseph Ladapo and law enforcement to discuss the recent increases in overdoses associated with fentanyl in Gadsden County.

Following that meeting, Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) and Florida Department of Health (DOH) worked together to deploy public awareness materials regarding the dangers of substance abuse, specifically fentanyl-laced drugs. Responding to overdose requires education and readily available resources at the hands of communities, families, law enforcement, emergency medical services, and health care providers.

Today, educational materials are being deployed statewide to ensure Floridians are aware of the signs of overdose and how to respond. Print and digital materials can be downloaded [here](#). A public health and safety alert was also deployed by DOH on July 8, 2022 to ensure Floridians remain vigilant of the signs of overdose. This alert can be found [here](#).

“When a person is suffering from a substance use disorder, it can be difficult to know where to turn,” said **DCF Secretary Shevaun Harris**. “Families and individuals can feel lost, but there are many resources available to help in every community across the state. Whether it’s finding a treatment program, recovery support or just someone to talk to, we can help connect individuals to supports that may save a life. By partnering with the First Lady and DOH we are working to ensure that these services are more prominent, available, and accessible than ever before.”

“Substance use disorder significantly impacts the health and lives of individuals suffering from it,” said **State Surgeon General Dr. Joseph Ladapo**. “Increasing awareness of drug abuse and available resources can help save Floridians from devastating and fatal health consequences. Our collaboration with the First Lady and DCF is an essential part of the state’s continuing efforts to provide assistance and comprehensive resources to those in need.”

This initiative is a collaborative effort led by DCF and DOH alongside other state and community partners.

For questions regarding potential overdoses and other drug-related exposures, Florida’s Poison Control Centers are a valuable resource to individuals throughout Florida, including emergency personnel. Poison Control Centers are staffed by health care professionals that are specifically trained to provide assistance in treating drug overdoses or assessing patients exposed to drugs of abuse. Medical toxicologists are available 24/7 for physician consultations. For poisoning questions or emergencies, call 1-800-222-1222. Visit the website at floridapoissoncontrol.org.

HEROS (Helping Emergency Responders Obtain Support) is a DOH program that provides **free** naloxone to emergency response agencies. Since the inception of the program in 2018, over 455,000 doses have been

distributed to emergency response agencies in Florida through HEROS. All first responders in Florida are eligible to request free naloxone through this program. More information can be found [here](#). If you or your organization are interested in obtaining or managing naloxone for the community, please visit [SAVE FL](#) to find available resources through DCF.

About the Florida Department of Health

The Florida Department of Health, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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