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DOH AND DCF LEADERSHIP VISIT FLAGLER COUNTY CORE NETWORK



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Deputy Secretary for Health Dr. Kenneth Schepcke addresses the audience

Flagler County, Fla. – Today, Deputy Secretary for Health Dr. Kenneth Schepcke, and Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) Assistant Secretary for Substance Abuse and Mental Health Erica Floyd Thomas, alongside community partners, visited the expansion of the [Coordinated Opioid Recovery \(CORE\)](#) in Flagler County - a comprehensive network of addiction and opioid treatment.

This year, Florida has experienced over **4,000** reported fatal overdoses. In Flagler County, Emergency Medical Services reported that in 2021, teams responded to over 400 overdose calls.

The CORE Network is the first of its kind in the nation, coordinated through the [Florida Department of Health](#), [Department of Children and Families](#), and [Agency for Health Care Administration](#). The full-scale treatment approach of the CORE Network expands every aspect of overdose response and creates an all-inclusive sustained system of care and patient navigation to holistically address all primary and secondary impacts of substance use disorder.

“The existing standard of care for substance use disorder is outdated. The current overdose response in most of the United States treats the acute overdose, without providing access to sustainable care,” said **Dr. Kenneth Schepke, Deputy Secretary for Health**. “That’s exactly why we’ve developed CORE. This program facilitates the necessary connections among local emergency response and specialty health care networks to not only respond to an acute overdose, but to connect individuals suffering from substance use disorder to sustainable and long-term care.”

In the wake of Hurricane Ian, there is also concern of increased substance use and overdose deaths due to the impact on individuals’ mental health and the disruption of normal pharmaceutical supply chains. It is critical that community partners provide resources to their communities as we continue our recovery efforts. We must remain vigilant both now and in the long-term to prevent overdose deaths.

“The CORE Network extends far beyond crisis treatment and stabilization,” said **DCF Assistant Secretary for Substance Abuse and Mental Health Erica Floyd Thomas**. “This model takes a holistic approach that brings together key partners at every level to meet the short and long-term medical, physical, psychological, and emotional needs of someone’s recovery journey. With this approach, I am confident that together we can reduce the devastating impact that opioids are having on our children, our families, and our communities.”

Substance abuse is a chronic multifaceted life-threatening disease. If an individual in Flagler County overdoses, specialized emergency medical services protocol will begin stabilization while transporting the patient to a specialty hospital with attained specialty expertise in addiction medicine. Once all emergent health threats are stabilized, the patient’s long term care needs will then be transferred to an expert multi-specialty outpatient practice to support sustainable recovery.

CORE provides a personalized treatment umbrella ranging from primary care to mental health support. By facilitating these connections in Flagler County, CORE disrupts the revolving door of addiction by connecting overdoses to sustainable care in real time.

If you, or someone you know, is struggling with substance use disorder and would like more information on CORE in Flagler County, you may contact [Flagler Cares](#) at 386-319-9483 or the [Florida Department of Health in Flagler County](#).

If you suspect an overdose, call 911 immediately. The state of Florida has deployed [resources](#) that can be posted in public areas to ensure Floridians remain vigilant of the signs of overdose, how to respond, and where help is available.

About the Florida Department of Health

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