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DOH AND DCF LEADERSHIP VISIT DUVAL COUNTY CORE NETWORK

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

Last year, Florida experienced over **5,900** reported fatal overdoses. In Duval County, Emergency Medical Services reported that in 2022, teams responded to over 5,300 overdose calls. Current data indicates Duval County is in the top 10 counties in Florida with the highest fatal overdose rates.



The CORE Network is the first of its kind in the nation, coordinated through the Florida Department of Health, Florida Department of Children and Families, and the 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.

“Addiction is heartbreaking for individuals and their families, and the ultimate goal is to address the stress and trauma that lead people to addiction,” **said State Surgeon General Dr. Joseph Ladapo.** “This program is an applied, intensive approach to managing addiction through evidence-based practices that connect people to what they need to get out of the horrific cycle of addiction.”



“The existing standard of care for substance use disorder is outdated.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 Schepcke, 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.”

“Our department is so energized by the cohesive approach to combating and ending the opioid pandemic,” **said Assistant Secretary for Substance Abuse and Mental Health Erica Floyd Thomas.** “Together we can ensure that individuals have access to need supports and lifesaving care. The CORE method is truly transformational and combines rescue response, stabilization, and long-term treatment, and we are proud to see this work extend into more Florida communities.”

Substance abuse is a chronic multifaceted life-threatening disease. If an individual in Duval 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 Duval 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 Duval County, you may contact the [Florida Department of Health in Duval County](#) at 904-253-2647.

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 CORE Network

CORE was successfully piloted in Palm Beach County for nearly two years and will be expanding in up to twelve additional counties to help patients break free from the deadly cycle of overdose. Floridians battling with addiction can utilize CORE for stabilization and to receive medication assisted treatment from a network of specialized medical experts that will help guide them on a sustained pathway to healthy success.

Florida is proud of its efforts in fighting the opioid epidemic and continues do so with access, evidence-based care, and lifelong comprehensive treatment. Information [about CORE and various recovery resources](#).

About the Florida Department of Health

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