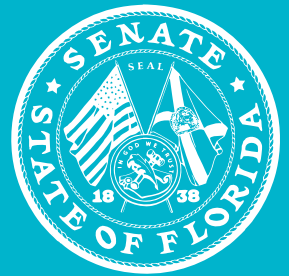
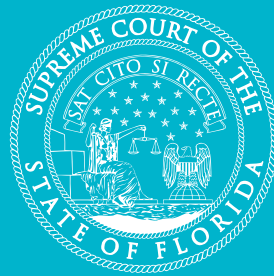


Statewide Drug Policy Advisory Council

2024 Annual Report

DECEMBER 1, 2024



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Statewide Drug Policy Advisory Council Members and Designees

Department	Member	Designee(s)
Department of Health	Joseph A. Ladapo, MD, PhD, State Surgeon General	
Florida Attorney General	The Honorable Ashley Moody	Joe Spataro
Office of Policy and Budget	Doug Simon, Director, Office of Drug Control	
Florida Department of Law Enforcement	Mark Glass Commissioner	Kristen Shipp Brennan
Department of Children and Families	Shevaun Harris Secretary	Jeffrey Cece
Department of Corrections	Ricky Dixon Secretary	Maggie Agerton
Department of Education	Manny Diaz, Jr. Commissioner	Jonathan Stephens
Florida Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles	Dave Kerner Executive Director	Captain Ryan Martina
Department of Juvenile Justice	Eric Hall, EdD Secretary	Tracy Shelby, PhD
Department of Military Affairs	Adjutant General John D. Haas	Captain David Rodriguez
Florida Senate	The Honorable Darryl Rouson	
Florida House of Representatives	The Honorable Spencer Roach	
Supreme Court Appointee	Judge Steve Leifman	Aaron Gerson
Gubernatorial Appointees	Melanie Brown-Woofter, Florida Behavioral Health Association; Sheriff Chad Chronister, Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office; Sheriff Peyton Grinnell, Lake County Sheriff's Office; Dean Inserra, City Church Tallahassee; Rabbi Meir Kessler, Jewish Recovery Center and Caron Renaissance; Sheriff Chris Nocco, Lake County Sheriff's Office; Peggy Sapp, Informed Families/The Florida Family Partnership	
Staff Liaison	Jon Conley	Maggie Dilger

Message from the State Surgeon General

Dear Colleagues,

As Florida continues to address ongoing overdose concerns, the dedicated members of the Statewide Drug Policy Advisory Council (Council) have been unwavering in their commitment regarding these pressing matters. Provisional data from the Florida Department of Law Enforcement indicates that from March 2022 through March 2023, overall drug overdose deaths in Florida decreased by 8.39%, and opioid related overdose deaths decreased by 11.21% (FLHealthCHARTS.gov).

In accordance with section 397.333, Florida Statutes, the Statewide Drug Policy Advisory Council submits the 2024 Annual Report to key stakeholders, including Governor Ron DeSantis, the President of the Senate, and Speaker of the House of Representatives. The Florida Department of Health (Department) serves as the coordinating entity for Council, and this annual report provides an update on the ongoing efforts of this Council.

The Department, in collaboration with state and local agencies including those represented on the Council, remains committed to intensify prevention initiatives, enhance the identification of individuals with substance use disorder (SUD) through screening and expand coordinated services to combat overdose deaths.

One of the Council's most significant priorities this year has been the expansion and success of the Coordinated Opioid Recovery (CORE) Network. This program provides comprehensive and continuous care for individuals with substance use disorders, treating these conditions with the same level of care as other chronic diseases. The CORE Network's integrated approach has been instrumental in helping many Floridians achieve and maintain recovery.

In 2023, the Florida Legislature established state funding for the State Assistance for Fentanyl Eradication (SAFE) program to support law enforcement in combating illegal fentanyl activities. The SAFE program has proven to be a vital initiative in the fight against the opioid crisis. This program has led to numerous arrests and significant seizures of fentanyl and other illicit drugs.

The Council acknowledges the steadfast support and collaboration of the Florida Legislature and Governor Ron DeSantis. Together, we remain dedicated to mitigating the impact of substance use on the well-being of the people of Florida in 2024 and beyond.

Sincerely,

Joseph A. Ladapo, MD, PhD
State Surgeon General

Introduction

The Statewide Drug Policy Advisory Council (Council) is dedicated to addressing the important issue of substance abuse in Florida. The Council, established under section 397.333, Florida Statutes continues to provide leadership and coordination in the development of a comprehensive drug control strategy for the state. (For a list of the 2024 Council members, see page 4.) This report outlines the Council's activities, accomplishments, and recommendations for 2024.

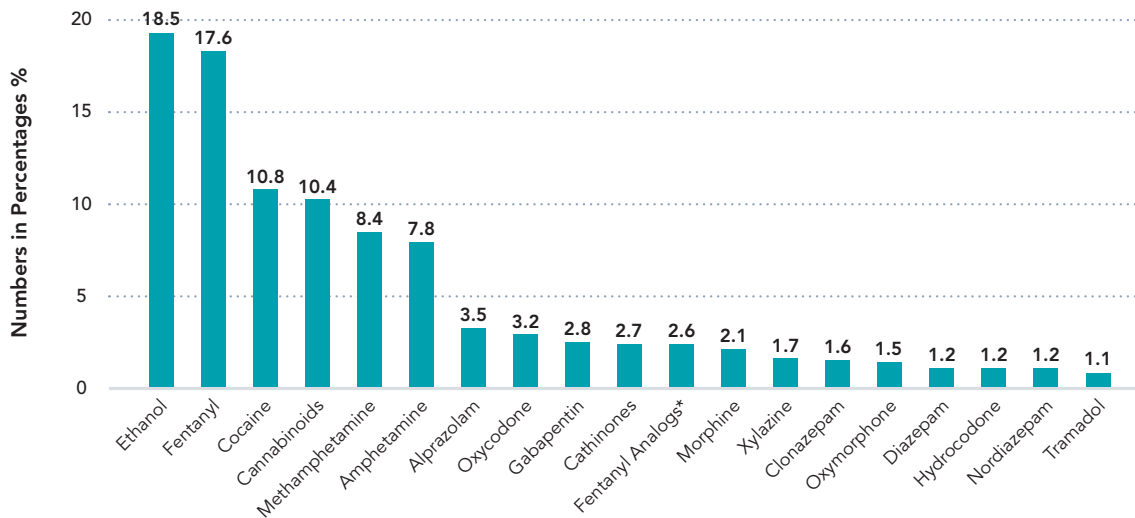
Broader Drug Policy Developments

Over the past year, Florida has taken significant steps to combat substance use and overdose related issues, including the passage of the Florida Prescription Drug Reform Act, and modifications to regulations governing the possession, distribution, and usage of controlled substances. This progress reflects the collaborative efforts of state agencies, local governments, non-profit organizations, and community stakeholders working under the Council's guidance. Despite these advancements, the state continues to face challenges posed by the opioid crisis, synthetic drugs, and emerging substances.

Drug-related Deaths

The Florida Medical Examiners Commission (MEC) annually reports on drugs identified in deceased persons and distinguishes instances where drugs were present in a deceased person, e.g., drug-related deaths or opioid-related deaths or where opioids or another drug caused the death. The MEC's 2023 annual report showed that total drug-related deaths dropped by 7% and opioid-related deaths decreased by 11% compared to the same time during 2022. Additionally, opioid-related deaths decreased by 10%, as did prescription drug-related deaths. The most frequently occurring drugs found in decedents were ethyl alcohol, fentanyl, benzodiazepines (including alprazolam occurrences), cocaine, cannabinoids, methamphetamine, and amphetamine. The top five drugs found to cause deaths were fentanyl, cocaine, methamphetamine, ethyl alcohol, amphetamine, benzodiazepines (including alprazolam deaths), and fentanyl analogs. According to the report, fentanyl, fentanyl analogs, heroin, methamphetamine, cathinones, cocaine, mitragynine, xylazine, and methadone were listed as the cause of death in more than 50% of the deaths in which these drugs were found.

Exhibit 1: Frequency of Reported Drug Occurrences in Decedents¹



¹The following drugs individually constituted less than one percent of drug frequencies and are not included: chlordiazepoxide, lorazepam, midazolam, oxazepam, temazepam, all hallucinogenics, all inhalants, buprenorphine, carisoprodol/meprobamate, codeine, GHB, heroin, ketamine, methadone, mitragynine, sympathomimetic amines, synthetic cannabinoids, U-47700 and zolpidem.

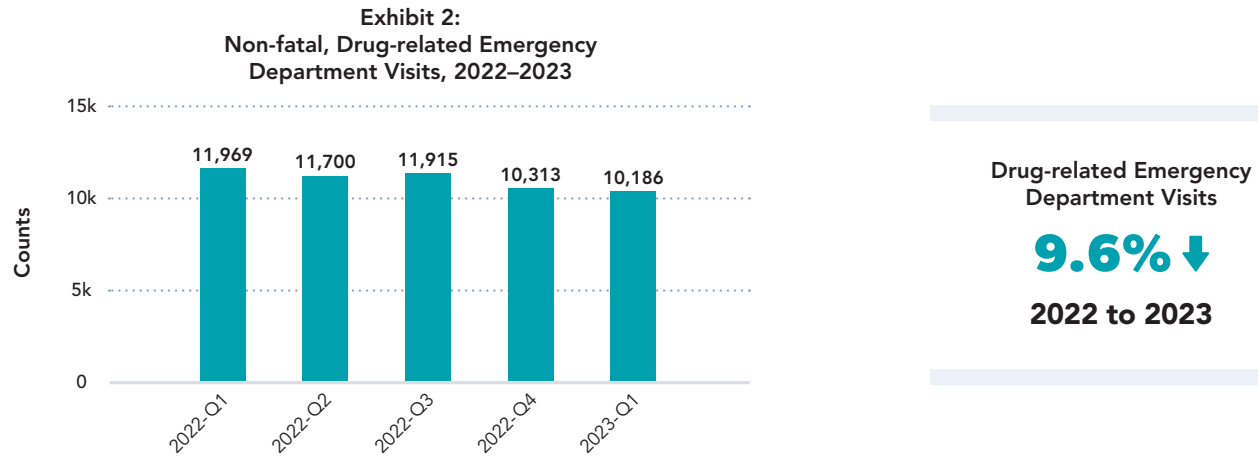
Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 percent because of rounding.

*Does not include 4-ANPP.

Source: Florida Department of Law Enforcement, Medical Examiners Commission. 2023 Medical Examiners Commission Interim Drug Report. July 2024.

Drug-related Emergency Department Visits

Data from Florida Medical Examiners indicates that the frequency of drug-related emergency department (ED) visits decreased by 9.6% from 2022 to 2023, and emergency medical services (EMS) responses to suspected drug overdoses dropped by 1.3% over the same period. While these reductions are encouraging, they highlight the need for ongoing vigilance in tracking drug events statewide. Reports of synthetic drug use, particularly fentanyl, continue to present significant risks that necessitates enhanced data collection and real-time response mechanisms.



Source: Florida Department of Law Enforcement, Medical Examiners Commission. 2023 Medical Examiners Commission Interim Drug Report. July 2024.

Law Enforcement Interdictions: The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) reported substantial seizures of illicit drugs in 2023, including over 13,176 kilograms of powder fentanyl and close to 79 million pills containing fentanyl. Florida's law enforcement agencies, through initiatives like the SAFE program, have contributed to this effort by seizing significant quantities of fentanyl and other illicit substances, leading to numerous arrests and disruptions of drug trafficking operations.

Florida's Response

The Council is committed to building on the efforts and accomplishments described in this report by the state and its partners over the last year to further enhance prevention and treatment programs, and to continue to support law enforcement and public health partnerships. (For more information about 2024 Council meetings, see Appendix 1.) By modifying strategies to adapt to emerging trends, Florida is well-positioned to further reduce substance use and overdose and improve public health outcomes.



The Council members are dedicated to its mission to substance use disorder (SUD) and reduce overdose-related deaths across Florida. Over the past year, the Council has seen significant progress through the collaborative efforts of its member organizations and partnerships with various stakeholders. The Council supports several ongoing programs and initiatives aimed at sustaining progress in SUD prevention and recovery. (For more information on resources, see Appendix 2.)

Key Accomplishments for 2024:

1. Implementation and Expansion of the CORE Network

The CORE Network has provided essential care for individuals with SUD, treating over 25,000 patients and offering nearly 550,000 services, ranging from psychiatric evaluations to primary care. Piloted in Palm Beach County, and eventually expanded to 12 other counties in August 2022, CORE provides a state-supported, coordinated system of addiction care for individuals with SUD.

2. State Assistance for Fentanyl Eradication Program

Launched in 2023 and expanded with an additional \$12.5 million in 2024, the SAFE program has bolstered law enforcement's efforts against illegal fentanyl operations, leading to numerous arrests and significant drug seizures.

3. Naloxone Distribution and Overdose Prevention

Through the Overdose Recognition and Response Training programs, including Helping Emergency Responders Obtain Support (HEROS) programs, as of August 2024, over 1,240,000 free naloxone kits have been distributed, and almost 74,300 individuals have been trained in overdose recognition and response.

4. Youth Substance Use Prevention and Education

Initiatives including "The Facts. Your Future." have intensified efforts to educate young people about the dangers of substance use. These programs work to equip students with resources to make healthier decisions.

5. Behavioral Health Workforce Development

To address workforce shortages in behavioral health, the Council has supported changes to the Florida Reimbursement Assistance for Medical Education (FRAME) program and encouraged the inclusion of students from behavioral health teaching hospitals. Collaborative efforts with the Physicians Workforce Advisory Council have supported the training of professionals to meet the increasing demand for SUD treatment services.

6. Law Enforcement and Safe Highways

Operation Safe Highways, supported by the Florida Highway Patrol and other agencies, has resulted in significant drug seizures, including fentanyl, heroin, and methamphetamine, contributing to the state's efforts to curb drug availability.



These activities reflect the ongoing efforts and achievements of the Council and its partners in addressing substance use and overdose, improving public health outcomes across Florida. The Council remains committed to its mission and looks to forward advancements.



In 2024, the Council developed a series of recommendations to further enhance Florida’s approach to combating SUD and reducing overdose deaths. These recommendations represent the combined efforts and collaborative focus of the Council's member organizations and partners. The Council respectfully submits these recommendations for consideration by the Governor and the Legislature.

1. Strengthen Behavioral Health Workforce Capacity

A strong, stable and well-trained workforce is essential to effectively address the opioid crisis and meet the anticipated growth in mental health and SUD service needs. Initiatives and strategies should include:

- Empowering licensed professionals to fully utilize their qualifications to meet behavioral health service demands.
- Supporting providers that train students by providing practical experience needed for acquiring behavioral health licensure and credentialing.
- Supporting mental health and SUD providers in competitively recruiting and retaining staff.
- Strengthening the workforce pipeline through loan reimbursement and scholarships that incentivize and support individuals pursuing educational and licensure credentials.

2. Enhance Youth Substance Abuse Prevention

Develop and implement a substance-abuse prevention strategy designed to reduce drug use among youth aged 12–17. Future strategies should consider:

- Increasing and maintaining substance abuse prevention efforts by securing sustainable funding and resources that increase screenings and address trauma-related issues among youth.
- Linking existing prevention education programs with Florida’s educators to reduce substance use and overdose among Florida’s youth.
- Expanding state partnerships with anti-drug coalitions, educational institutions, law enforcement, and other community sectors.
- Focusing on evidence-based and/or evidence-informed prevention strategies proven to reduce substance use.
- Increasing youth resiliency, coping strategies, positive mental health, and responsible decision-making.



3. Considerations for *Mitragyna speciosa*-Based Products

To address potential risks while recognizing emerging research regarding the use of *Mitragyna speciosa* (commonly referred to as kratom), the following consideration is recommended for the development of standards governing products containing the alkaloids mitragynine and/or 7-hydroxymitragynine. These standards aim to balance public health safety with evidence-based perspectives on potential therapeutic applications:

- Establish Serving Standards: Define a standard serving size and impose a limit on the total mitragynine content per package to mitigate risks of overuse.
- Implement Consumer Safeguards: Require clear warning labels on packaging, and prohibit marketing or packaging that targets children.
- Monitor and Review Public Health Data: Mandate an annual review of data from the Florida Department of Law Enforcement's Drugs in Deceased Persons report and the Florida Poison Control Centers on exposures and deaths associated with *Mitragyna speciosa*-based products.

4. Continuity of Care Program

Encourage the continued establishment of warm handoff programs, such as CORE, from hospital EDs to community opioid use disorder treatment providers. This may include dispensing naloxone to overdose patients before they leave the ED.

5. Increase Physicians with Addiction Medicine Specialty

Ensure graduate medical education positions are allocated to fellowship and residency programs for addiction medicine to increase the number of physicians specializing in addiction treatment.

6. Broaden Membership to Statewide Drug Policy Advisory Council

Recommend enhancing the membership to include the Secretary of the Agency for Health Care Administration and the Commissioner of the Office of Insurance Regulation to ensure a coordinated approach to addressing healthcare access, treatment affordability, and regulatory barriers in combating the opioid crisis and substance use disorders.

7. Support Recovery Oriented Systems of Care (ROSC)

Continue the statewide ROSC initiative designed to promote and enhance recovery efforts in Florida. This may include:

- Supporting the development and sustainability of ROSCs.
- Facilitating collaboration among community initiatives, service providers, and stakeholders.

8. Enhance Support for Baker and Marchman Act Implementation

Support effective implementation of the Baker and Marchman Acts to improve access to emergency crisis services while prioritizing the safety and well-being of individuals, families, and communities. Strategies may consider:

- Strengthening discharge planning, training, and resources for people with mental health, and SUD.
- Promoting effective implementation of changes in laws ensuring real-time understanding of changes through updated guidance and training.



9. Focus on Emerging Drug Trends

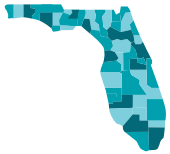
Monitor and respond to emerging drug trends, such as synthetic opioids and novel psychoactive substances. Strategies should consider:

- Enhancing data collection and analysis to quickly identify and address new drug threats.
- Implementing targeted prevention and treatment strategies for emerging substances.

10. Foster Technological Innovations

Advancements in technology may improve SUD prevention, treatment, and recovery. Future strategies in this area could focus on:

- Expanding telehealth services for addiction treatment.
- Developing digital platforms for patient support and engagement.
- Using data and analytic tools to monitor trends and outcomes.



These recommendations build on the progress made in the past year and address the ongoing challenges of SUD and overdose in Florida. By implementing these strategies, the Council and its partners can continue to make significant strides in reducing substance abuse and improving public health outcomes across the state.

Conclusion

The Council has made substantial progress in addressing SUD and reducing overdose related deaths in Florida over the past year. Through collaborative efforts with state agencies, local governments, non-profit organizations, and community stakeholders, the Council has supported numerous strategies and initiatives that have led to significant advancements in prevention, treatment, and recovery.

Programs: The expansion of the CORE Network and the SAFE program have been instrumental in reducing overdose-related deaths and disrupting the availability of illicit drugs. The implementation of naloxone distribution programs and coordinated care initiatives has further supported individuals at high risk of overdose, ensuring they receive timely and effective care.

Monitoring: Efforts to enhance youth substance use prevention, such as "The Facts. Your Future." campaign, along with improvements in the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP), have contributed to a statewide decrease in drug misuse and related harms. The Overdose Data to Action (OD2A) grant has enabled the state to improve data collection and surveillance, informing more targeted and effective prevention strategies.

Initiatives: The Council and its focus on workforce development in behavioral health, regulatory changes to enforce mental health parity, and the promotion of evidence-based prevention programs underscore its commitment to a comprehensive approach to SUD. These initiatives, supported by robust community partnerships and innovative technological solutions, highlight the Council's dedication to fostering a safer and healthier Florida.

Future Considerations

Looking ahead, the Council will continue to prioritize the implementation of its recommendations, focusing on strengthening the behavioral health workforce, enhancing substance use prevention efforts, and improving access to comprehensive treatment and recovery services. By building on the successes of the past year and addressing emerging challenges, the Council aims to sustain and expand its impact on public health.

The Council's 2024 achievements reflect a coordinated and sustained effort to combat substance use disorder and overdose in Florida. The Council remains committed to its mission and will continue to work diligently with its partners to ensure a brighter, healthier future for all Floridians.

Appendix 1: Summary of 2024 Council Meetings

February 29, 2024, Meeting

- **State Assistance for Fentanyl Eradication:** Florida Department of Law Enforcement Deputy Commissioner Vaden Pollard detailed the SAFE program's impact, including numerous arrests and significant drug seizures. An increase in the program's budget to \$25 million was proposed for Fiscal Year 2024–2025.
- **Florida Recovery Schools:** Dan Renaud, Executive Director, Florida Recovery Schools, discussed the benefits of Recovery High School, emphasizing its role in reducing relapse and supporting long-term recovery.
- **Discussion of Roles and Responsibilities of the Council:** Department of Health staff provided an overview of the Council's primary responsibilities, including analysis, research, recommendations, public awareness, response, and program evaluation.
- **Agency and Member Updates:** Updates included initiatives such as the "Lock Your Meds" campaign, ongoing law enforcement operations, and the introduction of mental health and substance use reduction best practices.

May 22, 2024, Meeting

- **National Prevention Week:** Staff provided an overview the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's National Prevention Week.
- **Revive Awareness Day:** The Chair announced that June 6 is designated as Revive Awareness Day, which is an important day to raise awareness about the importance of naloxone and similar treatments for individuals affected by overdoses.
- **Review and Update Recommendations 1–6.**
Key discussion points are as follows:
 1. Potential collaboration with the Physicians Workforce Advisory Council for Recommendation 1.
 2. The importance of emergency department-based buprenorphine induction for Recommendation 5.
 3. Encouragement for the Council members to share new ideas regarding drug policy.
- **Agency and Member Updates:** Updates on various initiatives, including the establishment of a new interdiction unit in Hillsborough County and continued emphasis on long-term recovery plans.

Appendix 1: Summary of 2024 Council Meetings (Continued)

August 28, 2024, Meeting

- **National Overdose Awareness Week:** August 27 – September 2, 2024
- **Coordinated Opioid Recovery (CORE) Network Program:** Overview of the program provided.
- **Presentation on 2023 Interim Report on Drugs Identified in Deceased Persons:** Dr. Brett Kirkland with the Florida Department of Law Enforcement presented the 2023 Interim Report on Drugs Identified in Deceased Persons from the Florida Medical Examiner's Report.
- **Presentation on the Treatment of Opioid Use Disorder in Pregnancy:** Kay Roussos-Ross, MD, from the University of Florida discussed the importance of treating opioid use disorder in pregnancy to ensure healthier outcomes for both mother and baby.
- **Review and Updates of Recommendations 7–10.**
Key discussion points included:
 1. Updates on the recently passed Live Healthy Act, and future updates on Opioid Settlement funds.
 2. The continued desire for the addition of Council seats representing the Agency for Health Care Administration and the Office of Insurance Regulation.
 3. Future updates on the statewide ROSC.
 4. Continuing to support and monitor the implementation of the Baker and Marchman Act laws.

Appendix 2: Programs and Resources

There are numerous initiatives across the state of Florida designed to promote a healthy lifestyle. Many entities have been involved in executing this strategy covering a wide array of approaches. Overall, the Council supports the programs below that encompass a comprehensive strategy to bring positive change to our citizens.

The Facts. Your Future. <https://thefactsyourfuture.org/>

The Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) is implementing First Lady Casey DeSantis' educational opioid use prevention initiative: The Facts. Your Future. (TFYF). This program engages youth, parents, and communities to raise awareness and reduce opioid and other substance use by promoting healthy decision making among young people. Currently, TFYF initiative includes a website, a lesson for youth in grades 9 through 12, factsheets, and real-life testimonials for parents and teachers to utilize when educating youth on the dangers of fentanyl and other substances. The lesson, which is one part of a three-part curriculum, educates youth on how various influences in their lives impact decision making, while teaching them effective coping skills that contribute to long-term resiliency, and the importance of healthy relationships for maintaining a substance free life. Additional materials, including educational lessons, fact sheets, social media advertisements, and a toolkit are under development. The entire three-part TFYF curriculum is aligned with Sunshine State Standards under Health Education, Strand HE.912.SUA: Substance Use and Abuse Standards. The implementation of TFYF initiative helps the state accomplish recommendations from the Statewide Drug Policy Advisory Council calling for a unified messaging campaign that targets youth and increases responsible decision-making skills and coping skills. DCF plans to continue developing and expanding TFYF initiative to more deeply engage youth and communities in successful opioid use education and prevention strategies.

Naloxone Expansion

DCF and the Department have prioritized the distribution of naloxone to prevent opioid overdoses. Through the HEROS program, nearly 600,000 doses of naloxone have been provided to emergency response agencies since 2018. This overdose prevention program has distributed thousands of naloxone kits to hospitals, ensuring that high-risk individuals have access to this life-saving medication. These efforts have been instrumental in reducing overdose deaths and improving community safety.

Continuity of Care Programs

DCF's Hospital and Jail Bridge Programs facilitate smooth transitions from emergency departments (EDs) and correctional facilities to community-based treatment providers. These programs, supported by peer-led interventions, aim to connect individuals with opioid use disorder to long-term care. In Fiscal Year 2023–2024, 48 hospitals participated in bridge programs, screened 9,659 individuals, and referred 71% to local providers. This approach has proven effective in promoting sustained recovery and reducing relapse rates.

Coordinated Opioid Recovery (CORE) Network - Hope for Addiction Recovery

The Coordinated Opioid Recovery (CORE) Network of addiction care provides 24/7, low-barrier access to buprenorphine induction services that address withdrawal and cravings, confer a protective effect against overdose, and begin the path to recovery. The CORE model includes the use of specialized EMS protocols for overdose and acute withdrawal, transport to an ED-based addiction stabilization center with experts in addiction medicine willing to initiate buprenorphine treatment, and peer support specialists to help with engagement and linkage to long-term, individualized, integrated treatment.

Appendix 2: Programs and Resources (Continued)

The initial cohort of CORE sites comprised 12 counties, and an additional 18 counties were incorporated in 2024. CORE receiving clinics or treatment centers have served 10,594 opioid use disorder patients as of June 2024. Of the 10,594 opioid use disorder patients served, 5,132 have received medication assisted treatment from a CORE receiving clinic, which is 48 percent of opioid use disorder patients seen at a CORE receiving clinic. Additionally, DCF continues to prioritize naloxone expansion through hospital EDs and inpatient units. Since 2022, this overdose prevention program has distributed 29,108 kits to through 69 enrolled hospitals.

Recovery Oriented System of Care (ROSC) | Florida DCF

DCF continues to lead recovery-oriented initiatives designed to enhance recovery in Florida. DCF partners with multiple stakeholders including, but not limited to, communities of recovery, network treatment service providers, Managing Entities, and Floridians for Recovery. DCF also works with the national Faces & Voices of Recovery to provide support to Managing Entities and local communities to develop Recovery Community Organizations (ROCOs) through ongoing training, technical assistance, and mentorship. ROCOs are independent, non-profit organizations led and governed by representatives of local communities of recovery who have direct lived experience with substance use and recovery.

ROCOs provide certified peer recovery support services, in addition to recovery-focused community education and outreach. ROCOs work closely with community treatment providers and other stakeholders to provide outreach, information and referrals, wellness recovery centers, and other recovery support services. Peers and ROCOs will work closely with hospitals and long-term community-based providers participating in the Coordinated Opioid Recovery (CORE) Network model and Hospital Bridge programs. Both programs utilize the peer workforce to provide care coordination to improve engagement and retention in ongoing treatment and recovery support. ROCOs contract with Managing Entities to provide outreach, education, and peer based recovery support services. The Department will continue to work with existing and emerging ROCOs to develop a strong network of recovery communities that work closely with providers and other stakeholders through a statewide recovery-oriented infrastructure.

Florida currently has 957 Certified Recovery Peer Specialists, along with 87 Provisionally Certified Recovery Peer Specialists. As of May 2024, 515 certified peers were employed among 150 community provider organizations. Community provider agencies also report that 573 individuals are employed and providing recovery supports but are non-certified, which is permissible for up to one year if they are working towards certification. DCF also has six Recovery Oriented Quality Improvement Specialist (ROQIS) positions that conduct quality assurance visits with providers to document recovery-oriented principles and practices, promote opportunities for all levels of lived experience to have meaningful inclusion in the evaluation of ROSC practices, and enhance the role of peers in the workforce through training and technical assistance. ROQISs also provide technical assistance for the expansion of medication assisted treatment. During FY 2023–2024, ROQISs completed 26 trainings on prevention, ROSC, Whole Health, and other peer-related topics. They also provided technical assistance on 1,219 instances to peers, Managing Entities, and other network service providers.

In FY 2023–2024 and FY 2024–2025, the Legislature appropriated \$13,000,000 and \$8,250,000, respectively, for peer support services. As of June 2024, approximately 55% has been expended from the FY 2023–2024 allocation, which is specifically designated for hiring new peers, onboarding new Recovery Community Organizations (ROCOs), or expanding the footprint of existing ROCOs.

Appendix 2: Programs and Resources (Continued)

Opioid settlement funds helped DCF establish five new ROCOs and increase the number of Peer Specialists in the workforce by 106. Additionally, 14 existing ROCOs expanded their services or sites. For example, in the Central Region, the Recovery Advocacy Support and Education Project expanded services through a program that supports the Cocoa Police Department and general community efforts, and Recovery Connections of Central Florida opened a new facility in Seminole County for drop-ins, while expanding their mobile services. In the SunCoast Region, five existing ROCOs were able to expand by adding capacity for outreach services or trainings on the Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) process.

Overdose Data to Action (OD2A) Grant

The OD2A grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has enabled Florida to improve overdose surveillance and prevention strategies. The current grant, awarded in September 2023, focuses on enhancing surveillance and prevention efforts with expected funding of \$76 million over five years. The overall data to action framework is shown below and highlights the steps of synthesize and analyze, prioritize, evaluate and then implement responsive programs.

Florida's Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP)

The PDMP, known as the Electronic-Florida Online Reporting of Controlled Substance Evaluation Program (E-FORCSE), continues to be a critical tool in curbing prescription drug misuse. From July 2022 to June 2023, the program reported a 4.2% decrease in controlled substance prescriptions and a 1.9% reduction in individuals prescribed one or more controlled substances. These reductions highlight the effectiveness of monitoring and regulating prescription drug distribution.

Law Enforcement Efforts

Florida's law enforcement agencies remain actively engaged in reducing the availability of illicit drugs. The SAFE program, funded by the Florida Legislature, supports state and local law enforcement in their efforts to combat fentanyl trafficking. Operations like Operation Safe Highways have resulted in substantial seizures of fentanyl, cocaine, heroin, marijuana, and methamphetamine, significantly impacting drug availability and distribution networks.

Graduate Medical Education Incentive Programs for Opioid and Substance Use Disorders

DCF is reviewing responses to a Request for Applications (DCF RFA 2324 093) for Graduate Medical Education Incentive Programs for opioid and SUD. The program's objectives are to increase the workforce available to serve individuals in Florida afflicted with opioid use disorders and co-occurring conditions, by supporting nationally accredited GME Programs that will prioritize and designate GME slots throughout the state. All applicants must be an existing, nationally accredited post-doctor of medicine or post-doctor of osteopathic medicine (non-military residency program) that intends to prioritize and designate credited GME slots, or a sponsoring entity that oversees, supports, and administers one or more Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education accredited residency/fellowship programs. Programs will offer specialized training in areas such as addiction medicine, addiction psychiatry, pain medicine, or a prerequisite residency program. All GME Program participants will be expected to include Department initiatives and services, such as CORE, State Mental Health Treatment Facilities, Addictions Receiving Facilities, Detoxification Units, and SUD Residential Treatment Settings, Short-term Residential Treatment, or Class III Psychiatric Hospitals that support the behavioral health system.

Appendix 2: Programs and Resources (Continued)

Awardees must present a comprehensive plan outlining strategies to increase the number of medical specialists in opioid and SUD treatment, particularly in underserved populations and areas. They are required to provide a curriculum detailing specialty training that prepares the workforce to address opioid use disorders, overdoses, and co-occurring substance use or mental health conditions. Additionally, the plan must include measurable objectives to ensure targeted growth in areas with significant shortages or unmet needs.

Baker Act Improvements

Florida continues to enhance the implementation of the Baker Act and Marchman Act through collaborative efforts across agencies and stakeholders. The 2023 Baker Act User Reference Guide created by DCF, provides a valuable resource for law enforcement officers, healthcare professionals, and service providers, offering updated guidance on procedures. Statewide initiatives also focus on addressing the needs of individuals with co-occurring mental health and intellectual conditions by improving discharge planning, training, and support services.

Recent legislative changes, effective July 2024, streamline processes for involuntary outpatient and inpatient services, remove the 30-bed limit for crisis stabilization units, and introduce more comprehensive discharge planning to ensure continuity of care. These changes also grant law enforcement officers greater discretion to determine when an individual requires involuntary examination, facilitating collaboration with Mobile Response Teams and Co-Responder teams to de-escalate situations and connect individuals to appropriate resources.

To support these improvements, significant funding has been allocated to expand outpatient services and enhance statewide implementation efforts. The updated 2024 Baker Act Handbook, revised annually, will be available in 2025, ensuring that professionals across the state have access to the latest tools and guidance to serve Florida's communities effectively.

Appendix 3: Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

Term	Definition
AHCA (Agency for Health Care Administration)	Florida state agency responsible for administering the state's Medicaid program and regulating health facilities.
CORE (Coordinated Opioid Recovery Network)	A program providing comprehensive, continuous care for individuals with substance use disorders, treating these conditions as chronic diseases.
CRPS (Certified Recovery Peer Specialist)	Individuals with lived experience in recovery who are certified to provide peer support services to those with substance use and mental health disorders.
DCF (Department of Children and Families)	Florida state agency focused on protecting vulnerable children, adults, and families through various programs, including substance use treatment services.
DEA (Drug Enforcement Administration)	A federal agency under the U.S. Department of Justice tasked with combating drug trafficking and distribution within the United States.
DOH (Florida Department of Health)	Florida state agency focused on public health promotion, disease prevention, and health services regulation.
DOE (Florida Department of Education)	State agency responsible for public education in Florida, including initiatives related to substance use prevention in schools.
ED (Emergency Department)	A hospital department where patients receive immediate treatment for acute illnesses and injuries, including overdose cases.
EMS (Emergency Medical Services)	A system that provides emergency medical care and transport to individuals experiencing acute health emergencies, including overdoses.
E-FORCSE (Electronic-Florida Online Reporting of Controlled Substance Evaluation Program)	Florida's Prescription Drug Monitoring Program aimed at curbing prescription drug misuse.
FDLE (Florida Department of Law Enforcement)	State law enforcement agency responsible for protecting and promoting public safety, including drug enforcement activities.
HEROS (Helping Emergency Responders Obtain Support)	A program providing free naloxone to emergency response agencies to prevent opioid overdose deaths.
MAT (Medication-Assisted Treatment)	The use of FDA-approved medications, in combination with counseling and behavioral therapies, to treat substance use disorders.
OD2A (Overdose Data to Action)	A CDC-funded grant program aimed at improving overdose data collection and implementing prevention strategies based on timely data.
ODU (Opioid Use Disorder)	A medical condition characterized by the problematic use of opioid drugs, leading to significant impairment or distress.
PDMP (Prescription Drug Monitoring Program)	A state-run electronic database used to track the prescribing and dispensing of controlled prescription drugs to patients.
ROSC (Recovery Oriented System of Care)	A coordinated network of community-based services and supports that is person-centered and designed to support recovery from substance use disorders.

Appendix 3: Glossary of Terms and Acronyms (Continued)

Term	Definition
SAFE (State Assistance for Fentanyl Eradication)	A program funded by the Florida Legislature to support law enforcement efforts in combating illegal fentanyl activities.
SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration)	A federal agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services dedicated to improving the quality and availability of prevention, treatment, and recovery services for substance use and mental health disorders.
SUD (Substance Use Disorder)	A medical condition characterized by the uncontrolled use of substances despite harmful consequences.
The Facts. Your Future	A youth substance use prevention campaign in Florida focused on providing students with prevention instruction and resources to avoid substance misuse.