



Supreme Court of Florida

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Chief Justice Proclaims September Awareness Month on Opioids and Stimulants Use Crisis, Response

Substance abuse and drug addiction have far-reaching, destructive impacts on Florida and the nation. The use of opioids and stimulants have reached epidemic proportions. U.S. drug overdose deaths rose almost 30 percent in the pandemic year of 2020, according to the Centers for Disease Prevention Control.

To raise awareness about opioid and stimulant use issues and disorders, and to highlight solutions involving the courts, Chief Justice Charles T. Canady issued a [proclamation](#) establishing September 2021 “as a month of awareness, training, and action regarding opioids, stimulants, and treatment for related substance use disorders.”

Opioid and stimulant use disorders exact a severe toll on the lives of millions in the United States. Impacts range from the suffering associated with addiction, impairment, overdoses, and death. Among further consequences are family disruption, job losses, increased crime, and taxpayer expense to address these and related problems in the justice, social services, and health care systems.

Ramifications are apparent throughout Florida courts, including drug courts, family courts, mental health courts, veteran courts, and other areas of the judicial system. Adverse impacts on both the courts and those whose lives have been directly affected can be reduced through greater awareness and access to resources.

Throughout September, the Office of the State Courts Administrator will offer a range of timely resources for judges, magistrates, court staff, and partners statewide. These resources will include two web events featuring national experts, an interactive e-learning module and two videos on stimulants, a new judicial app with real time resources for court personnel, launching of a service

to connect courts with live experts on court-specific needs, and other support resources for the courts to be as effective as possible in dealing with this crisis.

The activities and resources are a part of the Florida Courts Opioids & Stimulants RESPONSE (FCOSR), a statewide judicial branch response to Florida's opioid and stimulant crisis, involving both statewide and circuit-specific actions. The initiative focuses on enhanced awareness and effective ways to address this epidemic, especially through actions of the problem-solving courts and family courts. FCOSR is funded through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) State Opioid Response grant, as administered by the State of Florida, Department of Children and Families. FCOSR also provides support to Circuit Champions for their awareness raising at the circuit level.

Further details, including a copy of the proclamation, are available on the flcourts.org website.

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