



OFFICE OF THE STATE ATTORNEY

PRESS RELEASE



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Palm Beach County Bucks Statewide Trend: Latest Data Show Decrease in Opioid Overdose Deaths

State Attorney Dave Aronberg announced new data that show a 14% decrease in opioid-caused deaths in Palm Beach County in 2021, compared to the previous year. This statistic, from the Florida Department of Law Enforcement Annual Medical Examiners Report, comes at the same time as overdose deaths increased statewide.

In Palm Beach County, opioid deaths dropped from 604 to 519. But across Florida, there were 6,366 deaths, up from 6,089 the year before, or a nearly 5% increase. Most of the deaths were attributed to fentanyl or a fentanyl analog. Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid up to 50 times more potent than heroin.

Fentanyl is now being found in other non-opioid street drugs at an alarming rate. In many cases, the user has no idea that these drugs contain deadly fentanyl.

To save more lives, the State Attorney's Office is calling on state lawmakers to pass new legislation in 2023 that would decriminalize fentanyl test strips in Florida, which can easily detect the presence of this killer substance.

State Attorney Aronberg says the encouraging signs from the local battle against the opioid epidemic are partly due to the Sober Homes Task Force's crackdown on fraud

and abuse in the drug treatment industry since October 2016. That effort includes 121 arrests and 110 convictions so far.

Aronberg also credited broader access to Narcan to quickly help reverse the effects of an opioid overdose, along with innovations in treatment in our community such as the county-funded Addiction Stabilization Unit.

“We have made real progress and know there is still more work to do,” Aronberg said.

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