



OFFICE OF THE STATE ATTORNEY

FIFTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
IN AND FOR PALM BEACH COUNTY



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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STATE ATTORNEY ARONBERG TO TESTIFY BEFORE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE ON THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC

State Attorney Dave Aronberg and Chief Assistant State Attorney Alan Johnson will testify before the United States House of Representatives Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, on Tuesday, December 12, 2017 at 10:15 a.m. Please see the announcement from the House Committee below.

State Attorney Aronberg stated, “Our office has led the fight against fraud and abuse in the drug treatment industry, and I am honored to have the opportunity to testify before Congress on our strategy and recommendations to combat the opioid epidemic on a national level.”

Aronberg’s Sober Home Task Force has made 41 arrests in the past year for patient brokering and other criminal activity within the drug treatment and sober home industries. Under the leadership of Chief Assistant State Attorney Alan Johnson, two citizens’ committees within the Task Force proposed changes to Florida law that led to the 2017 passage of HB 807, which tightened enforcement and oversight of the drug recovery industry.

Despite the Task Force’s success in making arrests and closing rogue treatment centers and sober homes, State Attorney Aronberg said that local law enforcement cannot solve this problem alone. Aronberg has repeatedly called for federal action, noting that unscrupulous individuals continue to exploit well-intended federal laws to prey upon opioid addicts. Aronberg says that he hopes that his testimony “will encourage Congress to fix federal policies that have unwittingly led to too many preventable deaths.”

Announcement from the committee:

WASHINGTON, DC – The House Energy and Commerce Committee today announced a [hearing](#) before the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee for Tuesday, December 12, 2017,

at 10:15 a.m. in room 2322 of the Rayburn House Office Building. The hearing is entitled, “Examining Concerns of Patient Brokering and Addiction Treatment Fraud.”

With the opioid epidemic and an increase in substance use disorders, there has been an increased demand for treatment. Sadly, recent reports indicate that individuals known as “patient brokers” are treating individuals seeking treatment for their opioid addiction as a commodity, rather than helping them receive legitimate treatment and ultimately achieve recovery.

[#SubOversight](#) will examine the patient broker scheme and a number of complex issues within. Among those issues, are: how to better protect this vulnerable population, how this scheme is affecting individuals seeking treatment and the substance use disorder treatment community, what the states are doing to combat this issue, and the challenges they are facing as a result.

Confirmed witnesses include:

- Douglas Tieman, President and Chief Executive Officer, Caron Treatment Centers;
- Pete Nielsen, Chief Executive Officer, California Consortium of Addiction Programs and Professionals;
- Dave Aronberg, State Attorney, 15th Judicial Circuit;
- Alan S. Johnson, Chief Assistant State Attorney, 15th Judicial Circuit, Head of the Palm Beach County Sober Homes Task Force; and
- Eric M. Gold, Assistant Attorney General, Chief, Health Care Division, Office of the Massachusetts Attorney General.

Bipartisan committee leaders have actively been investigating patient brokering reports for the last several months, first sending a [letter to the Department of Health and Human Services \(HHS\)](#) in July, and most recently sending [letters to departments of six state governments](#) to gather additional information regarding how substance use disorder treatment facilities are regulated and overseen at the state level in November.

The Majority Memorandum, witness list, and witness testimony for the hearing will be available [here](#) as they are posted.

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Subcommittees

[Health \(115th Congress\)](#)

Issues

[Combating the Opioid Crisis](#)

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