

Flagler county to make huge step towards opioid epidemic

Backed by fire Chief and Chief executive Officer of Flager cares, a proposition to help Flagler reduce the amount of opioid overdoses by introducing a Subcontract between Flagler Cares, Inc. and Flagler County in Flagler County Commission Meeting

With the use of drugs on the rise and the increase in overdoses that comes with it, It is in the community's best interest to make a move not only to stop but educate and care for those affected. With the number of overdoses increasing from 8 deaths per 100,000 residents to 49 per 100,000, it is clear that there is now an issue that is rising in Flagler county. Two out of three drug overdose deaths in 2018 involved an opioid, and an estimated 10.1 million people aged 12 or older misused opioids in the past year; The community has needed an answer as to how to not only lessen the number of deaths that are occurring but to help those with addictions and try and stop the issue from the source.

With the help of a large grant, Flagler county and areas alike have set up programs that will not only help those who may be overdosing but also be able to have an outreach program to monitor the progress of those who have an addiction to said drugs.

Headed by Fire Chief Michael Tucker, On the October 17th Flagler County Commission Regular Meeting, Alongside Carrie Baird, Chief Executive Officer of Flager Cares; Addressed the community to talk about the combining of n Flagler Cares, Inc. and Flagler County to Support an Opioid Drug Addiction Stabilization Program.

The program, which is modeled after one used in Palm beach, has taken the critical components used in said program to fit the community size of Flagler and is currently in phase two, hoping to continue moving at a reasonable speed and continue to create contracts.

With the use of a short time funding, the program will be able to build not only a connected system for anyone experiencing an overdose but those at risk of an overdose who are given a plethora of resources available in Flager county so they can start their treatment.

The outreach program will also allow community paramedics to begin medication to reduce cravings and withdrawal, increasing the rate at which those people can create their recovery and expand their help to all around the county and start the treatment. Baird and Chief Tucker hope this program will continue to be in service even after the funding stops; as Chief Tucker says, "I think the key in going forward and continuing to administer this kind of program is just for us to be flexible and be able to try to hit the curveballs that continue to throw at us."

The board of commissioners responded positively to the proposition. The motion was approved by all five commissioners and urged those listening to keep an open mind about what recovery does and to be kind to those who may need recovery. And that while the situation may seem

scary and hopeless, they should not fear the circumstances and that help is there for those who need it, as the commissioner states

"Do not fear talking about it, do not fear asking for help, and do not fear that you are going to lose everything... But there is hope, so keep that."

Programs like these have been rising around the USA, with 14,000+ substance abuse facilities in the U.S being built and used to get those who need help in a firm yet controlled and comfortable environment to encourage the users to get clean with the resources they may need, such as therapy or even proper medication. By giving the necessary resources to start the process, 1.27 million Americans are now receiving medication-assisted treatment, as stated by the U.S department of health and human resources. And with a 4.1% decline in drug overdose deaths in the United States from 2017 to 2018, it is no wonder why these programs are starting to make their way into cities and counties alike.