



# Supreme Court of Florida

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Florida Supreme Court Highlights Crisis, Proclaims Opioid Use Disorder Awareness Month**

Opioid use disorder in the United States is so prevalent, the National Safety Council reports more people die from an accidental opioid overdose than from traffic fatalities. The National Institute on Drug Abuse earlier this year published data reflecting a surge in Florida overdose deaths involving opioids.

To raise awareness of opioid use disorder and highlight solutions pursued in the courts, Chief Justice Charles Canady issued a proclamation establishing August “as a month of awareness, training, and action regarding opioids and treatment for opioid use disorder.”

Opioid use disorder exacts a serious toll on the lives of millions in the United States. Its impacts range from the suffering associated with addiction, overdoses, and death. Among its further consequences are increased crime, job losses, family disruptions, and taxpayer expense to address these problems in the justice, social services, and health care systems.

Its effects are apparent throughout the Florida Courts System. Negative impacts on both the courts and those whose lives have been directly affected by opioids can be reduced through greater awareness and access to resources. Courts throughout the state of Florida grapple with the opioid epidemic on a daily basis through drug courts; family courts, mental health courts, veteran courts, and other components of the court system.

Throughout August, the Office of the State Courts Administrator (OSCA), will offer a range of timely resources for judges, magistrates, court staff, and partners statewide. These resources will include a virtual training series, e-learning modules, an online center for related publications and websites, and other support for the courts to be as effective as possible in dealing with this crisis. The activities and resources are a project of the Florida Courts Opioid Initiative (FCOI), a statewide judicial branch response to Florida’s opioid crisis, involving both statewide and circuit-specific efforts. The initiative focuses on enhanced awareness and effective ways to address this epidemic, especially through actions of the problem-solving courts and family courts. FCOI 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.

Further details, including a copy of the proclamation, are available at [flcourts.org/OpioidInitiative/](https://flcourts.org/OpioidInitiative/).

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