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JUNE 2017



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PLAIN PILLS TO WHITE POWDER

By Eric Berkowitz

At the February 18, 2010 GMCA Advisory Board meeting, City Commissioner Bruce Roberts lamented an explosion of disreputable local pain clinics, noting that within a few years, their numbers in South Florida jumped from 4 to 176. Drawing on his long experience as the City's top cop, Roberts knew that the vast majority of drugs dispensed at these clinics wind up on the street. Having unwittingly become the lynchpin of an East coast drug network seemed more intolerable than the thousands of lives it abruptly extinguished. Seven years later, as the Pill Mills fade into an embarrassing historical footnote; South Florida autopsy tables have never been busier. Here's what happened...

PAINKILLER CAPITAL

In the spring of 2009, State Attorney Michael J. Satz of the Seventeenth Judicial Circuit convened a Grand Jury to study the "proliferation of pain clinics in South Florida". On November 19, 2009, the "Broward County Florida Grand Jury Report on Pain Clinics" was released. It confirmed facts that were essentially old news to the local drug world and the DEA - that South Florida anchored the State's

reputation as the nation's "Painkiller Capital".

Referring to DEA statistics, the report confirmed that in 2006, more oxycodone was distributed in Florida than in any other state - 40 percent more than in second-ranked California. In 2008, Florida was home to the nation's top 25 pain clinic dispensers of prescription drugs as well as the top 50 physicians who dispensed the most oxycodone in the United States.

The DEA described how the pain clinics supplied product to "mules" from Eastern Kentucky who would keep a portion of the haul for local customers and bring the rest to distribution sites controlled by the "James Marsillet II" drug ring in Kentucky. South Florida pill mills similarly supplied statewide networks in Ohio, South Carolina and Tennessee. Not to be outdone by competing drug rings in other states, local dealers replenished their Miami, Fort Lauderdale and Palm Beach inventories at these one stop shops. Market exchange rates were remarkably seductive; as pills picked up by mules for \$5 each brought \$30 from dealers who sold them on the street for \$80 apiece.

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Despite a mountain of Federal evidence that Florida supplies neighboring states with most of their illegal prescription drugs through this network of pill mills, state lawmakers ignored the problem. Fed up with his peers' passive neglect, former Senator Mike Fasano filed Senate Bill 2272 in 2010. His "Pill Mill Bill" prohibited clinics from dispensing more than a 72-hour supply of a controlled substance to patients who pay by check, cash or credit card. Since third party carriers maintain current provider and client utilization databases for ascertaining potential abuse, clinics billing insurance coverage or worker compensation could dispense larger amounts of the regulated medications. His bill required physicians practicing in a pain clinic to complete a pain medicine fellowship or residency, or be recognized as a pain management specialist by the appropriate licensing board. Additionally, Pill Mills had to register with the Department of Health and could not advertise their products and services.

With a Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP) capable of tracking the illegal distribution of narcotic drugs authorized by the Legislature in 2008 and the new statutes regulating pain clinics, the last piece of the puzzle was left to the Department of Health. Having campaigned on reversing Florida's reputation for coddling drug dealers, newly elected Governor Rick Scott charged the State's medical board with drafting rules governing pain clinic operations.

Until the State provided them with the statutory tools to effectively address this fast-growing threat in their own back yard, on March 2, 2010, Commissioner Roberts and Fort Lauderdale Mayor Jack Seiler prompted the City Commission to pass a stopgap measure – Ordinance No. C-10-07 – establishing a 180-day moratorium on licensing pain management clinics. Working with state health authorities, D.E.A., F.B.I., and the Broward Sheriff, Fort Lauderdale police initiated a campaign to cripple the South Florida supply chain of legal drugs that fueled the street market.

RAIDING THE RAT NESTS

Reassured that statutory help was on the way, our City cops participated in multi-jurisdictional raids to close pain clinics on a weekly basis. On April 5, 2010, the Florida Department of Health shut down the Fort Lauderdale Pain Relief Center at 201 W. Oakland Park Boulevard. Two weeks after suspending the clinic's main physician, 85 year-old Dr. Michael Lazzopina, for over-prescribing thousands of painkillers, the Health Department closed the clinic for operating without a "designated physician" responsible for ensuring medical standards. The Fort Lauderdale Pain Relief Center is owned by Integra Health Services, a company run by chiropractors Michael Rechter and David Romano, who operated similar clinics in Dania Beach, West Palm Beach and Jacksonville. Not surprisingly, they also ran an MRI facility in Louisville as well as pain clinics in Louisville and Elizabethtown, Kentucky - one of several states flooded with South Florida prescription drugs.

On May 4, 2010, the Health Department closed the Broward Chronic Pain and Recovery Center on Powerline Road after suspending the medical license of Dr. Alfred E. Boyce on April 28th for prescribing 10,800 tablets to six patients over a six month period. The pills were predominantly oxycodone and Xanax, two highly addictive drugs that are Mother's milk on the Black Market. The 80-year old Dr. Boyce was a local medical "Hall of Famer". His license was also suspended in 2004 and 2005 when the chiropractor running an Oakland Park cosmetic medicine clinic left four people comatose from overdoses of botulinum toxin shots ordered in Boyce's name. The Pill Mill was owned by businessman William D. Benton.

Five days earlier, on April 30th, Fort Lauderdale police and state agents raided the Mercy Wellness and Recovery Center on Northeast 48th Street, another of Benton's cash cows. Benton also owned the Fort Lauderdale Pain and Rehabilitation Clinic in a strip plaza on Commercial Boulevard around the corner from his Broward Chronic Pain operation. Doctors working in these clinics were paid between \$800,000 and a \$1,200,000 a year, based primarily on the number of people they'd plied with pills. The daily take for each clinic was about \$50,000.

On May 24, 2010, Fort Lauderdale police and Florida Department of Health officials raided the Broward Urgent Care clinic at 1409 SE First Ave. The clinic's medical director was Dr. Bernard Cantor, an obstetrician and faculty member at Florida International University medical school. The clinic's president was Alan Daley.

At the same time, Federal agents arrested Boca Raton internist Dr. Michael Roy Shook, owner and supervising doctor of the Lauderdale Medical Clinic at 2762 W. Oakland Park Boulevard. Although state health authorities filed a disciplinary case against the then 52-year-old Shook on February 10, 2010 and barred him from prescribing narcotic drugs, he and the clinic's listed president, ultrasound technician Gary Adams, continued hawking up to 700 pills a month to drug mules from Eastern Kentucky. Following a two-year investigation by a federal task force in Kentucky and South Florida, members of the "James Marsillet II" drug ring in Kentucky identified Shook as their primary supplier.

After an intensive 14-month investigation, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration and local police agencies served search warrants on three dispensing pain clinics in Lake Worth and West Palm Beach, two of which were less than a mile apart. The 29-year-old twin brothers (now 36) who owned the pill mills – Jeff and Chris George – had no medical training, and their criminal records didn't preclude them from acquiring a license to operate medical clinics, hire physicians and accrue a \$40 million nest egg by selling truckloads of painkillers. According to prosecutors, each of 5 staff physicians ordered about half a million oxycodone tablets in one year. While the twins are each serving 15 years on Federal drug charges, on December 2, 2015, Jeff George was sentenced to another 20 years for drug trafficking and second degree murder for a clinic customer that overdosed.

URINALYSIS & THE PDMP

Following his swearing in ceremony, Governor Rick Scott's first Executive Order (11-01) froze all new regulations. He then eliminated the state Office of Drug Control, which had been coordinating the war on pill mills. When Governor Scott ordered the Florida Department of Health (DOH) to submit new rules for monitoring prescription drugs and pain clinics, as mandated in Senator Fasano's "Pill Mill Bill", local efforts to close pain clinics were placed on hold. City officials in Fort Lauderdale, Miami and Palm Beach anticipated that the new State rules would provide a more effective legal platform for closing the clinics.

On January 7, 2011, when the DOH delivered to Scott the regulations he requested, agency officials and Medical Board physicians stressed their urgency and requested implementation within 7 days. Instead, the Governor authorized an economic study to determine how much these rules would cost the private sector. Most of the estimated \$69 million was for urinalysis, enabling clinics to determine patient intoxication. Although the \$15 cost is paid by the patient, Scott's new "Office of Fiscal Accountability and Regulatory Reform" was enigmatically mired in a dilatory debate about the potential financial impact of urinalysis.

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As weeks passed, newly elected Attorney General Pam Bondi, whose campaign was anchored by repeated promises to close pill mills, said she would talk to the Governor about approving the rules he requested from DOH. A week later, she called a press conference to describe a nightmare she had in which someone died from a new party drug known as MDPV. Sold in head shops as "bath salts", Bondi sought to ban the drug for its linkage to several deaths and suicides. She forgot to mention the pain clinics that dispense Vicodin and Xanax like chicklets and kill thousands of Floridians every year.

More weeks passed. Although approved by the DEA, every police group and medical association, Governor Scott blocked implementation of a privately funded prescription drug database (PDMP) that the 2008 Legislature created to track over-dispensing physicians and drug dealers and addicts that go "doctor-shopping." At that time, thirty-eight states used similar databases to track oxycodone and other painkillers that had become the most widely abused (and lethal) drugs in the country (currently, 49 states have PDMPs, Missouri the sole exception). Scott commented "I don't support the database. I believe it's an invasion of privacy." When top law enforcement officials, legislators and Kentucky Governor Steve Beshear (since drugs from Florida annually kill thousands of his constituents), pleaded with Scott to reconsider, he blew them off.

Unable to convince the Governor to stop protecting the pill mills and approve the State Medical Board's pain clinic rules, Attorney General Bondi appointed former State Senator Dave Aronberg to spearhead her statewide campaign against the pill mills. When asked about his progress, Aronberg announced that he was still waiting for Scott's regulation squad to determine whether urine tests create an unfair financial burden on "narco-tourists" (AKA drug mules).

Initially perplexed by the Governor's refusal to inconvenience drug dealers, many Tallahassee lawmakers didn't agree with his inexplicable decision to treat criminal enterprises as if they were legitimate businesses worthy of State protection. New Port Richey Republican Senator Mike Fasano, who's "Pill Mill Bill" finally provided the statutory wherewithal to stifle the growth of Florida's street drug trade, vowed to actualize the prescription drug database. Since every law enforcement agency in the State declared it an indispensable tool in the war on drugs, former Senate President Mike Haridopolis said public funding would be used if necessary.

While able to stall State and local efforts against the pill mills, Scott had no control over Federal authorities, who had begun raiding pain clinics from Miami to West Palm Beach in February 2010. Operating seven clinics in Broward and Miami-Dade, convicted heroin

dealer Vincent Colangelo allegedly distributed more than 660,000 oxycodone pills over a two-year period, netting \$150,000 a day. The raids revealed clinic techniques used to assist pill brokers trying to avoid detection. An undercover agent witnessed a clinic nurse coach a roomful of mules to avoid filling prescriptions at pharmacies that use a computerized database such as Walgreens. She sternly warned, "Do not go to Walgreens. I can't say this enough. They are not your friend; they are the enemy."

Calling the crackdown "Operation Snake Oil," administrator Michele Leonhart of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) said "Prescription drug abuse is our country's fastest growing drug problem, and pill mills such as those in Florida are fueling much of that growth." U.S. Attorney Wifredo Ferrer added "According to recent estimates, Florida prescribes ten times more oxycodone pills than all other states combined."

Forced to the sidelines by Governor Scott, State and local law enforcement was fuming. Intimating that Scott's pro-pill mill maneuvers weren't unintentional missteps, former Palm Beach County State Attorney Michael McAuliffe commented "I hope and expect that the new governor's office, when they say they want the most favorable climate in the world for business, that they're talking about legitimate businesses. These aren't legitimate businesses, and that's the heart of the matter. They haven't been regulated, and they've mushroomed in our communities."

Early on, the public rationalized the new Governor's dissolution of the state Office of Drug Control as a political preview of his intended deregulation policy. After proposing to abolish the narcotics database in documents he submitted to the Legislature along with his budget proposal, Scott told a roomful of journalists on February 7, "The program has not been working." Stunned reporters looked at one another as Scott's staffers cringed. Evidently, Scott was the only one in the room – possibly the state – who didn't know that the database had never been implemented.

Hoping to defuse mounting concern about Scott's inexplicable behavior, some of his supporters cited an intractable commitment to minimizing the role of government. Law enforcement officials and lawmakers opined that the Governor's vision of a pro-business agenda doesn't distinguish between legitimate and criminal enterprises. Others intimated that he pops pills and shares a bond with the overmedicated.

Like local jurisdictions across the State, the Fort Lauderdale City Commission's reaction blended anger and confusion. The eerie events in Tallahassee placed their plans to close down more pain clinics on ice. When asked for his take on the Governor's enigmatic behavior, Commissioner Bruce Roberts stated "It doesn't make any sense, maybe he's a Libertarian."

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THE DEA HAMMERS HEALTHCARE

Despite Scott's opposition, in early April, 2011, former Florida Surgeon General Frank Farmer, MD, ordered officials to proceed with implementation of the state's prescription drug monitoring program (PDMP). Paul Sloan, president of the Florida of Pain Management Providers, echoed concerns by medical and law enforcement officials Society about two crippling program loopholes. First, pharmacists had a 15-day window to enter the prescription data, sufficient time for doctor-shopping drug mules to hit scores of other outlets without detection. Secondly, physicians weren't required to check the database prior to issuing a narcotic prescription, thereby relegating the program's primary benefit. Finally, proponents agreed that it would take years to realize palpable results.

As local jurisdictions closed their illegal pain clinics while Tallahassee played "Where's Waldo?" with drug policy, DEA officials snatched up an opportunity to massage their long-tarnished image. After spending decades neck-deep in media sludge for a failed war on drugs, the agency jumped in with both feet.

In 2010, the DEA issued a decision that greatly expanded the guidelines for corresponding responsibility – a decades-old federal mandate that requires drug dispensers to ensure that prescriptions for controlled substances are issued for a "legitimate medical purpose." Typically, pharmacists complied by contacting the prescribing physician to verify the prescription's legitimacy. Since the new DEA guidelines intimated that pharmacists should do more, albeit without explaining how, confused pharmacists either profiled the customer or solicited diagnostic feedback from the physician.

Having set the stage for a proxy war between physicians and pharmacists, the agency engineered crackdowns with hefty fines for some of the nation's largest pharmacy chains and distributors, pulling the plug on providers red-flagged for violating the new reporting requirements.

In 2013, the Drug Enforcement Administration hit Walgreens with the largest fine in agency history because certain outlets didn't report an increase in narcotic prescriptions. When the DEA suspended the controlled substance licenses for Walgreens' Jupiter distribution center and six of its 831 Florida pharmacies, the corporate goliath agreed to an \$80 million settlement to prevent similar actions in Colorado, Michigan and New York from eroding the stock price.

When two CVS stores in Sanford failed to report what the DEA considered "a suspicious increase in controlled prescriptions,"



the agency barred the pharmacies from dispensing the drugs until CVS coughed up \$22 million. Also, drug wholesaler Cardinal Health temporarily lost its license to distribute controlled substances from its Lakeland facility. The wholesaler paid \$34 million to settle DEA claims that it failed to report having filled some large orders for hydrocodone.

On July 1, 2014, the CDC released a report describing a mixed blessing. While announcing a 23 percent reduction in prescription drug deaths in Florida from 2010 to 2012 (the first such decrease in the country), it added that 68 people died from heroin overdoses in the first six months of 2013, more than double the same period in 2012. In crediting the closure of more than 250 Pill Mills for the reduction in prescription drug deaths, the report intimated that prescription pill-poppers cut off by the crackdown switched to the more readily available street drug.

Dr. Steven Rosenberg, a West Palm Beach physician who sat on the joint committee that wrote the rules governing pill mills and "doctor shoppers" that were incorporated into State Law, said that 2010 reports of seven daily prescription drug deaths were actually understated, explaining "There were reports of 11 per day just prior to the legislation being enacted." Four years earlier, the CDC announced that Florida was home to 98 of the nation's top 100 dispensers of oxycodone. In contrast, the 2014 report confirmed that none of the top 100 oxycodone prescribers were in Florida. Rejoicing by the CDC, DEA, State officials and local Florida jurisdictions over the drop in prescription drug deaths obscured the concomitant increase in fatal opioid overdoses.

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FEARFUL PHARMACISTS

While State and local officials were successfully shuttering Pill Mills and jailing "narco-tourists" who funnel product to the thriving street drug trade, Federal authorities had a different agenda. Faulting lax oversight by physicians and pharmacists for the prescription drug crisis, the agency used the highly publicized crackdown to threaten healthcare providers who don't proactively help police their own industry. While culling some shady doctors and drug mules, agency officials also targeted providers who failed to meet the tougher dispensing quotas and reporting standards. Although the DEA claimed that exceeding the quota would simply trigger a red flag, pharmacists soon learned that this was agency spin for a license suspension.

Along with the high profile corporate take-downs, the DEA permanently revoked the licenses of 13 Florida pharmacies, and brought dozens of others to the brink of dissolution by suspending their licenses – sometimes for months – before restoring them after conceding that the pharmacies hadn't done anything wrong.

Faced with an agency policy that indiscriminately threatened their livelihood, pharmacists across the state sharply curtailed access to prescription pain medication, turning away legitimate pain patients in droves. Fearful that exceeding the arbitrary agency quota would place their licenses at risk, pharmacists began reserving their minimal supply of controlled pain medication for regular customers. Even then, many would typically request an MRI report, or contact the doctor to inquire about alternative treatment modalities.

Also of concern was a state law that included a trigger for distributors to red flag retailers who order more than 5,000 dosage units per month of controlled substances, the kind of one-size-fits-all legislation that generally wreaks havoc on the target industry. Two issues dogged the legislation. After the DEA slammed distributor Cardinal Health with a \$34 million fine, wholesalers began treating the dosage limit as a cap, not a trigger. Secondly, applying the same limit to a large pharmacy with 4 or 5 pharmacists and a Mom and Pop operation with a part-time pharmacist was impractical as a trigger and inequitable as a cap.

Randy Margrave, a pharmacist at the Holly Hill Pharmacy in Daytona Beach, said wholesalers are also under pressure from the DEA. "They monitor and report dispensing patterns and limit the number of doses provided to pharmacies." When Margrave placed a slightly larger order in advance of a price hike, the pharmacy was flagged by the wholesaler. Due to wholesaler overreactions and DEA mandates, Margrave doesn't accept new chronic pain patients, and ignores 15 to 20 calls a day from people inquiring about the availability of painkillers. Musgrave commented "They've got the wholesalers shaking in their boots."

COLLATERAL DAMAGE: THE ACCESS CRISIS

Orange City pharmacist Roger Accardi observed

"There has been collateral damage and those are patients who have legitimate pain. In this climate, there are going to be patients who are turned away. Some are going to be legitimate, and that is terribly unfortunate." Florida pharmacists and drug wholesalers intimidated by an overzealous DEA and the failure of its current drug policy to distinguish between legitimate pain management patients and drug mules has precipitated an access crisis. Thousands of cancer patients, patients with spinal cord injuries and surgical patients newly discharged from hospitals were sent on "pharmacy crawls", forced to visit a dozen or more pharmacies – often in different neighborhoods – in order to fill a prescription. Professionals who need the medication to continue working, and seniors who use the drugs to stay mobile became "opioid refugees".

"Opioid refugee" is the term used by doctors, pharmacists and patient advocates to describe a pain patient who was abandoned by pharmacists or physicians fearful of federal sanctions. Michael A. Jackson, executive vice president and CEO of the Florida Pharmacy Association, explained "Pharmacies and physicians are scared to provide pain medication to people who legitimately need it, including terminally ill cancer patients." Linking DEA policy to the growing shortage of medication, Jackson said that when Physicians and Pharmacists fear DEA accusations of "overprescribing" or "overdispensing", "You have a chilling effect because they don't want their licenses taken away from them." He concludes. "We now have a situation where access is a problem. The pendulum has swung too far to the right. We have to find a way to bring the pendulum back to the middle."

Awash in complaints about the access crisis, the Florida Board of Pharmacy's Controlled Substances Standards Committee held a series of meetings to explore solutions. The committee verified testimony from some of the thousands of complainants. For example, Lesley Young traveled to more than a dozen Jacksonville-area pharmacies before finding one that would fill prescriptions for her husband, a former mechanic who was crushed by a car the fell off a lift and left him paralyzed.

Diagnosed with Stage IV breast cancer, Suzy Carpenter spent three days pleading with pharmacists at 13 drug stores before she received her pain medication. Three pharmacies rejected 4-year-old Aiden Lopez's prescriptions for narcotics after the child underwent surgery for kidney cancer. Physicians who testified at the Board of Pharmacy meeting identified patients who committed suicide because no one would fill their prescriptions.

Florida Medical Association General Counsel Jeff Scott did the "pharmacy crawl" in Tallahassee in an attempt to locate pain medication for his elderly father who was diagnosed with cancer. Scott said "Pharmacists need to fill the damn prescription. If a doctor orders it, they need to fill it. Period! - unless they have reason to believe it's fraudulent." Governor Scott and Attorney General Pam Bondi both accused the DEA of creating an atmosphere that punished thousands of legitimate pain patients.

Having attended some of the pharmacy board meetings, Susan Langston, the Drug Enforcement Administration's divergent program manager for the Miami Field Division, said that the DEA's Miami staff "is horrified to hear the heartbreaking stories of cancer patients, hospice patients, surgery patients and legitimate pain patients being forced to endure needless suffering," adding that 4-year-old Aiden Lopez's story was "deeply troubling." Langston later explained that the passionate reaction by her DEA staffers was rooted in first-hand experience, as several were forced into pharmacy crawls while trying to fill controlled prescriptions for family members suffering from critical illnesses. After delivering lengthy prepared remarks, Langston said. "This has to stop, and it has to stop now."

Allison Dudley, executive director of the Florida Board of Pharmacy, said "Pharmacists are worried if they order too many narcotics, they're opening the door to a raid by the DEA or a state criminal investigation." When the issue surfaced in Tallahassee, Senator Aaron Bean (R – Jacksonville), who chaired the Senate Health Policy Committee, said "The 5,000 dose trigger for wholesalers in Florida Law is blocking pharmacists from ordering what they need to serve all of their patients", and agreed to file legislation to revise the controversial red flag quota. In 2016, Bean's Committee enacted Senate Bill 1604, which now provides that if an order exceeds 7500 doses, the wholesaler only needs to determine if the purchase is reasonable, eliminating the incentive to reject legitimate orders.

Although Langston has since clarified that the DEA's expectations of pharmacists doesn't include withholding pain medication from patients with legitimate prescriptions, the agency has repeatedly refuted claims that its actions caused the shortage of prescription pain medication. "All we are asking is for the pharmacies to use their training, education and experience and look at the totality of circumstances to det

ermine if the prescription is legitimate," said Jeffrey Walsh, assistant special agent in charge of DEA's Central Florida office in Orlando. "Nobody has been the subject of an enforcement action that hasn't been a longterm, egregious and habitual offender."

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) disagrees, having issued a report holding the DEA responsible for inflaming the shortage. Specifically, the GAO states that the DEA contributed to the shortage by "mis-managing its quota system for the production of controlled substances."

PYRRHIC VICTORY: OXY TO HEROIN

While the Pill Mill crackdown has reduced the number of prescription drug overdose deaths to 2007 levels, and transferred Florida's dubious distinction as the nation's "Painkiller Capital" to neighboring Georgia, the total number of opioid overdose deaths has skyrocketed. When oxycodone, Xanax and hydrocodone grew scarce, they were replaced by heroin. Unlike prescription drugs, heroin is typically laced with a lethal menu of other unknown chemicals, either to stretch the supply or enhance the effect. More than 1400 people in Broward, Palm Beach and Miami-Dade counties fatally overdosed last year, almost a third of the 4400 overdose deaths in the State. In 2016, 592 people died in Palm Beach County, 582 in Broward and more than 250 in Miami-Dade. Medical Examiners attribute roughly 90% of the fatalities to heroin. While communities in Hollywood, Overtown and Pompano are hot spots, the most egregious abuse appears to surround Delray Beach. To slow the scourge in their county, Palm Beach Commissioners are considering a \$3 million emergency war chest.

The variants responsible for roughly half of the recent deaths are cut with synthetic forms of heroin such as fentanyl (50% stronger than heroin) or carfentanyl, an elephant tranquilizer that's a thousand times stronger than fentanyl. Synthetic narcotics are slapped together in Chinese laboratories and mailed to a worldwide clientele in nondescript packages. Drug dealers stretch inventories by mixing the heroin variants with a variety of other substances, ranging from the relatively harmless lactose (milk sugar) to deadly rat poison or weed killer.

The customer base is huge – and growing. Although the Pill Mills' clientele spanned the East Coast, the drug mules also supplied an army of local addicts. When shuttering the clinics thinned the supply of prescription opioids, users turned to cheap and plentiful heroin. Drug dealers are also breaching thousands of supposedly drug-free "Sober Houses" that pepper South Florida. After undergoing detoxification, addicts in recovery often live in an emotionally supportive group home, a "Halfway House" that provides therapy sessions, crisis management, and a healthy supply of naloxone (brand name Narcan), a competitive antagonist of opioid receptors that neutralizes opioid overdoses. The Narcan often determines whether house-members who fall off the wagon spend the following day on the beach or the Medical Examiner's autopsy slab.

A drop in the number of South Florida fatal overdoses in 2017 is attributed to the increased availability of naloxone and other overdose reversal drugs. The Department of Children and Families, the state's lead

agency on substance abuse, provided nearly 2,500 Narcan nasal spray kits to treatment providers between August and December. Naloxone was also made readily available to Medicaid patients when added to the State's Medicaid preferred drug list in early 2017. Until recently, a single dose of these opioid antagonists was sufficient to rescue victims on the brink of death. If the heroin is mixed with fentanyl or other synthetic narcotics, first responders often need to administer a dozen or more doses to revive a victim, quickly burning through their supply.

Over the past four decades, Recovery has grown from a niche business into a \$billion industry in South Florida (predominantly Palm Beach), as local treatment centers offering an opportunity to clean up on a subtropical beach drew addicts from across the planet. Many decide to remain here after their across the street.

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25 Intergalactic Pompano Beach Bead and Jewelry Show Emma Lou Olson Civic Center 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Info.: 888-729-6904 Cheetah Classic Car & Truck Show Cheetah Club (100 Ansin Blvd., Hallandale) 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Info.: 305-214-2277	26	27 BINGO Galt Towers Social Room (4250 Galt Ocean Drive) 7:30 p.m. Info.: Cyndi Songer: 954-563-7268 Alzheimer & Dementia Support Broward Health Imperial Point Medical Library 2:30 p.m. Info.: 954-776-8961	28 BINGO Regency South Party Room 7 p.m. Info.: Bob Pearlman: 954-547-4063
2 Sunday Jazz Brunch Fairchild Tropical Garden 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Info.: 954-396-3622 18th Annual Mango Brunch 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tix.: www.fairchildgarden.org/events	3 Commissioner Bruce Roberts: Pre-Agenda Meeting Beach Community Center, 6 p.m. Info.: 954-828-5033	4 BINGO Galt Towers Social Room (4250 Galt Ocean Drive) 7:30 p.m. Info.: Cyndi Songer: 954-563-7268 Family Celebration and Fireworks Show Ft. Lauderdale Beach Info.: 954-396-3622	5 BINGO Regency South Party Room 7 p.m. Info.: Bob Pearlman: 954-547-4063
9 Dancing By The Sea The Beach Pavilion, LBTS 6 to 8 p.m. Info.: www.lbtsevents.com/events Soulful Jazz Sundays Gulfstream Park 6 to 9 p.m. Info.: http://www.gulfstreampark.com	10 Food Truck Invasion 6 to 10 p.m. Cultural Plaza, Lake Worth Info.: www.lakeworth.org Commissioner Bruce Roberts: Pre-Agenda Meeting Beach Community Center, 6 p.m. Info.: 954-828-5033	11 BINGO Galt Towers Social Room (4250 Galt Ocean Drive) 7:30 p.m. Info.: Cyndi Songer: 954-563-7268	12 BINGO Regency South Party Room 7 p.m. Info.: Bob Pearlman: 954-547-4063
16 3rd Annual Fun Fit 5k Challenge Tradewinds Park, 7 a.m. Info.: 954-461-5515	17 Fort Lauderdale Job Fair The Westin Fort Lauderdale 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Info.: 1-866-838-5111	18 BINGO Galt Towers Social Room (4250 Galt Ocean Drive) 7:30 p.m. Info.: Cyndi Songer: 954-563-7268	19 BINGO Regency South Party Room 7 p.m. Info.: Bob Pearlman: 954-547-4063
23 Dancing By The Sea The Beach Pavilion, LBTS 6 to 8 p.m. Info.: www.lbtsevents.com/events	24	25 BINGO Galt Towers Social Room (4250 Galt Ocean Drive) 7:30 p.m. Info.: Cyndi Songer: 954-563-7268 LBTS BugFest 2017 (Through 7/30) El Prado Park Reg: www.lbtsevents.com/bugfest-by-the-sea Info.: 954-640-4209	26 BINGO Regency South Party Room 7 p.m. Info.: Bob Pearlman: 954-547-4063 Summer Business Expo 2017 Broward Convention Center 4 to 8 p.m. Info.: 954-838-9644

JUNE 30: Friday Night SoundWaves, Performer: The Free Rads, Ft. Lauderdale Beach Hub (Las Olas & A1A), 6 to 9 p.m.

JULY 4: Caregiver's Support Group, BHIP Private Dining Room (1st floor), 2:30 p.m., Info.: 954-776-8961

JULY 4: Lauderdale-by-the-Sea July 4th Events, El Prado Park, Info.: 954-640-4210

JULY 4: Hollywood Beach Fourth of July Celebration, Hollywood Beach (300 Connecticut St.), Info.: 954-921-3404

JULY 4: Old Fashioned Fourth & Collectible Car Show, Flamingo Gardens, 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Info.: 954-473-2955

JULY 4: 2017 Independence Day at Tradewinds Park Sprint Triathlon | Duathlon, Tradewinds Park, 7:30 a.m., Info.: 954-213-6699

JULY 8-9: Florida Gun & Knife Show, South Florida Fairgrounds, WPB, Info.: 321-777-7455

JULY 14: Music Under the Stars, Performer(s): On The Rox (Pop, Top 40), Pompano Beach Great Lawn (Atlantic Blvd. to 16th St.), 7 p.m., Info.: 954-786-4111

JULY 15: Red Eye, ArtServe, 6 p.m. to Midnight, Info.: 954-462-8190

JULY 15: Community Health & Wellness Fair, Atlantic Technical College/Arthur Ashe, Jr. Campus (1701 NW 23rd Ave.), 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Info.: 754-322-2821

JULY 15: Smoke on the Water BBQ Feast & Competition, Esplanade Park, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., Info./Tix.: <https://www.gorivenwalk.com/>

JULY 22-23: The Best Bead Show, Courtyard by Marriot Cypress Creek, Info.: 610-241-8329

JULY 22-23: Buckler's 11th Annual Craft Fair, War Memorial Auditorium, Info.: 386-860-0092

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AUGUST 5

Household Hazardous Waste & Electronics Drop-off
4300 NW 36th St., Lauderdale Lakes, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Info.: 954-828-8000

AUGUST 5

Holidays to Spare! Holiday Mash Up Bowling Tourney
Brunswick Zone Margate Bowling Alley, Margate
11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Info.: 954-537-3370

AUGUST 5-6

Dig The Beach Volleyball Pompano Beach
Pompano Beach (222 N Pompano Beach Blvd.)
7 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Info.: 561-241-3801

AUGUST 5-6

South Florida Monster Jam
BB&T Center
Info.: 703-448-4000

AUGUST 12

Extreme Kayak Fishing Summer SLAM Series
Pompano Beach Fishing Pier and Public Beach
9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Info.: joe@extremekayakfishing.com

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<p>29</p> <p>IV Savor Food & Wine Exhibition 2017 (Through 6/30) DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Miami Airport & Convention Center 2 to 8 p.m. Info.: 305-358-5988</p>	<p>30</p> <p>Starlight Musicals Jimmy Stowe & The Stowaways (Tropical Rock/Jimmy Buffet) Holiday Park 7 to 10 p.m. Info.: 954-828-5363</p> <p>Friday Night Music in the Square Anglin's Square (El Mar & Commercial Blvd.) 6:30 to 10:30 p.m. Info.: 954-776-5092</p>	<p>1</p> <p>25th Annual International Mango Festival (Through 7/2) Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Info.: 305-667-1651</p> <p>45th Annual Freedom 5K Quiet Waters Park, 7 a.m. Info.: 954-461-5515</p>
<p>6</p>	<p>7</p> <p>Friday Night SoundWaves Performer: The Fabulons Ft Lauderdale Beach Hub (Las Olas & A1A) 6 to 9 p.m.</p> <p>Starlight Musicals Performer: RD Project (Latin) Holiday Park 7 to 10 p.m. Info.: 954-828-5363</p>	<p>8</p> <p>Moonlit Movies: STORKS Jaco Pastorius Park, 3 p.m. Info.: 954-630-4507</p> <p>NPC Southern States Championships War Memorial Auditorium, 6 p.m. Info.: 54-763-2718</p>
<p>13</p> <p>Commissioner Dean J. Trantalis Telephone Town Hall Meeting Discuss City programs, services, or ideas to improve Fort Lauderdale 7 to 8 p.m. Call: 855-840-6970 to join the discussion Info.: 954-828-4743</p>	<p>14</p> <p>Friday Night SoundWaves Performer: The Goodnicks Ft Lauderdale Beach Hub (Las Olas & A1A) 6 to 9 p.m.</p> <p>Starlight Musicals Performer: Across the Universe (Beatles Tribute Band) Holiday Park 7 to 10 p.m. Info.: 954-828-5363</p>	<p>15</p> <p>Citywide Yard Sales Jaco Pastorius Park 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Info.: 954-630-4495</p> <p>6th Annual Boca Burger Battle Sanborn Square Park (72 N. Federal Hwy.), Boca Raton 6 to 10 p.m. Info.: 561-338-7594</p>
<p>20</p> <p>ArtStroll Green Turtle Plaza, LBTS 5 to 8 p.m. Info.: 954-909-2200</p>	<p>21</p> <p>Friday Night SoundWaves Performer: Othello Molineaux Quintet Ft Lauderdale Beach Hub (Las Olas & A1A) 6 to 9 p.m.</p> <p>Starlight Musicals Performer: Classic Rock Therapy (Classic Rock) Holiday Park 7 to 10 p.m. Info.: 954-828-5363</p>	<p>22</p> <p>Dig The Beach Volleyball (Through 7/23) Fort Lauderdale Beach 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Info.: 561-241-3801</p> <p>Household Hazardous Waste and Electronics Drop-off Events Mills Pond Park 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Info.: 954-828-8000</p>
<p>27</p> <p>37th Annual Florida Supercon (Through 7/30) Broward County Convention Center Info.: 954-399-1330</p>	<p>28</p> <p>Friday Night SoundWaves Performer: Shauna Sweeney Ft Lauderdale Beach Hub (Las Olas & A1A) 6 to 9 p.m.</p> <p>Starlight Musicals Performer: The Fabulous Fleetwoods (Southern Rock) Holiday Park 7 to 10 p.m. Info.: 954-828-5363</p>	<p>29</p> <p>Underwater Pier & Beach Cleanup LBTS Info.: 954-616-5909</p>

First Saturday of Every Month: Beach Cleanup, Commercial Blvd. & the Beach LBTS (Meet at Pavilion), 9 to 9:30 a.m., Info.: 954-776-1000

First Saturday of Every Month: North Beach Art Walk, 3280 NE 32nd St, 7 to 11 p.m., Info.: 954-537-3370

Second Saturday of Every Month: Beach Sweep, Fort Lauderdale Beach Park, 1100 Seabreeze Blvd., 7 to 11 a.m., Info.: 954-593-8501

Second Saturday of Every Month: Burlock Coast Farmer's Market, Burlock Coast at the The Ritz-Carlton, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Info.: myfortlauderdalebeach.com

Second Tuesday of Every Month: Orchid Greenhouse Tours, Bonnet House, 11 a.m. to Noon, Info.: 954-703-2606

Mondays: Food Trucks at Artspark, 5:30 to 10 p.m., Youngs Circle in Hollywood

Thursdays: BHIP Farmer's Market, Broward Health Imperial Point Medical Arts Pavilion (633 N Federal Hwy.), 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Sundays: Tour-the River Ghost Tour, Stranahan House & Water Taxi, 7:30 p.m., Tix.: 954-524-4736

Sundays: Las Olas Sunday Market, 333 East Las Olas Blvd. & SE 4th Ave., 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Info.: 954-426-8436

Saturdays: Saturday Night Under the South Florida Stars, Fox Astronomical Observatory at Markham Park, Sunset to Midnight, Info.: 954-384-0442

Daily: Yoga on the Beach, Ocean Manor Resort (4040 Galt Ocean Dr.), 9:30 a.m. (weather permitting), Mats supplied, \$10 donation, Open to the Public, Info.: 754-701-0197 or 516-840-1455

Chip LaMarca's

MAY 2017 Newsletter



Dear Broward County Residents,

I am honored to serve as your county commissioner, representing our coastal communities from Deerfield Beach to Fort Lauderdale and all of the amazing communities in between. Here are some recent highlights from around Broward County.

Opioid Epidemic in Broward County

Our nation is in the middle of an unprecedented opioid epidemic with more deaths from drug overdoses in 2014 than in any year on record. And, the majority of drug overdose deaths (more than 6 out of 10) involved an opioid. The rate of overdose deaths in the nation has nearly quadrupled since 1999. The effects of this epidemic are on the rise in the State of Florida as well. Broward County has also seen staggering increases of drug overdoses. After compiling an extensive amount of data, Broward's Office of Medical Examiner and Trauma Services has announced that 582 people lost their lives to drugs in Broward in 2016, more than double the amount in 2014, and up by 260 deaths from 2015.

After several counties urged Governor Rick Scott to declare a Public Health Emergency in the State of Florida, on May 3rd following the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention declaring a national opioid epidemic, Governor Rick Scott signed Executive Order 17-146 declaring a Public Health Emergency across the state. By signing the Emergency Order, it allows the state to immediately draw down on more than \$27 million in federal grant funding from the United States Department of Health and Human Services Opioid State Targeted Response Grant which was awarded to Florida on April 21st to provide prevention, treatment and recovery support services. In addition to declaring a Public Health Emergency, Surgeon General Dr. Celeste Philip issued a standing order for Naloxone, an emergency treatment for opioid overdose. This will ensure that first responders have immediate access to this lifesaving drug to respond to opioid overdoses.

With the rising numbers of overdoses in Broward County, I sponsored a resolution to extend our support for the Governor's Executive Order declaring a Public Health Emergency for the State of Florida and the Board of County Commissioners unanimously supported this resolution. The Board also supported the efforts of the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Department of Justice, and the National City-County Task Force to curtail the overprescribing of opioids with more physician education and better risk assessment of patients. These are a few of the steps that Broward County is taking to ensure that we are doing everything possible to raise awareness, stop drug abuse and save lives.

Proper Flag Disposal

I was inspired when I heard about a program that the National Association of Counties was doing with the National Flag Foundation and the National Sheriff's Association. When a flag is worn, tattered, ripped or soiled beyond repair, it is no longer fit to serve as a symbol of our country and should be retired and disposed of properly. As part of the program, residents can now dispose of old, tattered and torn flags at Broward County Government Center locations and various other locations around Broward County. Flags deposited in designated boxes will be collected and disposed of properly and should be folded appropriately before being placed in the box. I am proud to have brought this resource to the Broward County Board of County Commissioners. This program is part of a national campaign to support flag etiquette, ensuring a dignified retirement for our U.S. Flag.

Official U.S. Flag Disposal Box Locations in Broward County:

Governmental Center East

115 S Andrews Avenue
Fort Lauderdale, 33301
Mon-Fri: 8am-5pm

Government Center West

1 N University Drive
Plantation, 33324
Mon-Fri: 8am-5pm

Broward County Library Beach Branch

3250 NE 2 Street
Pompano Beach, 33062

Galt Ocean Mile Reading Center

3403 Galt Ocean Drive
Fort Lauderdale, 33308

City of Deerfield Beach BSO Substation

300 NE 2 Street
Deerfield Beach, 33441

City of Fort Lauderdale

100 N Andrews Avenue
Fort Lauderdale, 33301

Town of Hillsboro Beach

1210 Hillsboro Mile
Hillsboro Beach, 33062

Town of Lauderdale-By-The-Sea

4501 Ocean Drive
Lauderdale by the Sea, 33308

FLAG DISPOSAL PROGRAM



Community Hurricane Preparedness Event

Hurricane season is quickly approaching and preparations are now underway for the "Eye of the Storm" community hurricane preparedness event sponsored by the Florida International University Hurricane Research Center, Florida Division of Emergency Management, Broward County, City of Fort Lauderdale and the Museum of Discovery and Science (MODS). This year's event is scheduled for Saturday, May 20th, from 10AM to 5PM at the educational MODS facility located at 401 SW 2nd Street, Fort Lauderdale, 33312.

Activities include; interactive demonstrations with tropical weather briefing and hurricane hunters, presentations by hurricane experts, the opportunity to explore the museums storm center while meeting local TV meteorologists, and live theater shows for all ages. Free museum admission is granted for the event and this is a wonderful way to get the entire family to begin preparing for hurricane season which runs June 1st thru November 30th.

Be sure to visit Broward's Hurricane website for preparedness tips.

"Beach Bud" Adoption Event

On May 20th from 11AM to 4PM, Broward County Animal Care and Adoption will host a special "Beach Bud" adoption event at the Animal Care Adoption Center located at 2400 Southwest 42nd street in Fort Lauderdale. In order to put the spotlight on big dogs that are typically not adopted as quickly as smaller dogs, a promotion of all adoption fees on larger-sized dogs (40lbs or more) will be waived. Additionally, adopters who select a big dog that day will receive a special keepsake "Beach Bud Bag" filled with items to help care for their new pet.

The Resident's Guide to Government provides a convenient resource to help people stay connected to their local government. It includes contact information for County officials and Federal, State, and local agencies. Visitors can subscribe to E-news and social media sites. Please sign up at www.Broward.org/District4 to receive email updates from our office. If there is anything that we can do to assist you with your vision for a better Broward, please do not hesitate to contact our office at 954-357-7004 or by email at clamarca@broward.org.

As always, it is my honor to serve you.
Best regards,

Chip

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EDITOR'S COMMENTARY:

Chip LaMarca's MAY 2017 Newsletter

In his May 2017 LaMarca Letter, District 4 Broward Commissioner Chip LaMarca details how to respectfully dispose of old, tattered and torn American flags that are no longer fit to serve as a symbol of our country, explaining how they should be properly folded before being placed in a specified retirement box at one of eight locations in Broward County; admonishes constituents to adequately prepare for the June 1 through November 30 Hurricane Season, culling guidance from the annual "Eye of the Storm" event at the Museum of Discovery and Science; encourages those seeking a new pet to drop in on the special "Beach Bud" adoption event, which heavily incentivizes welcoming a larger dog into families. LaMarca opens by summarizing measures taken by Broward County to combat a nationwide epidemic of opioid overdose deaths, a devastating scourge that overwhelmed South Florida morgues, decimated thousands of families and claims a record number of victims each month. How the campaign to close Pill Mills helped catalyze this crisis is posted elsewhere in this edition. For LaMarca's May 2017 message to constituents, read on... – [editor]

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COMMISSIONER BRUCE ROBERTS

MAY 2017 Newsletter



WHERE ARE AMERICANS MOVING? HERE ARE THE FASTEST-GROWING — AND SHRINKING — CITIES IN THE U.S.: As reported in the Triangle Business Journal by G.Scott Thomas: Eleven major metropolitan areas, led by the Texas duo of Houston and Dallas-Fort Worth, are growing at a pace of more than 1,000 persons per week, based on population estimates issued Thursday by the U.S. Census Bureau. The federal agency released July 2016 estimates for 382 metros and 3,142 counties across the nation. American City Business Journals, the parent company of Triangle Business Journal, used the new federal data to calculate weekly growth rates. Topping the list was the Houston metropolitan area, which soared from an April 2010 population of 5.92 million to a July 2016 estimate of 6.77 million, translating to a net increase of 2,612.3 persons per week. The Dallas-Fort Worth area was second with a weekly net gain of 2,474.6 persons. Rounding out the top five were the New York City, Atlanta and Miami-Fort Lauderdale metros, all with population increases larger than 1,500 persons per week. The other metros above the weekly threshold of 1,000 were Washington, Los Angeles, Phoenix, Seattle, San Francisco-Oakland and Austin.

FXE IS 70 AND STILL SOARING: March 11, 2017 was a historical day in the City of Fort Lauderdale. Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport (FXE) turned 70! Formerly a training center for World War II Navy pilots, including former President George H.W. Bush, today FXE is home to more than 900 based aircraft. Nearly 160,000 aircraft take off and land at the airport annually, ranking it as one of the top 10 of busiest general aviation airports in U.S. Lo-

cated in the heart of the City's Uptown Business District, Executive Airport plays a vital role in South Florida and the national airport system, serving a variety of private, corporate, and government aviation needs through services and amenities including four fixed-base operators; a 24-hour Air Traffic Control Tower; a Customs and Border Protection facility; 24-hour on-site aircraft rescue, firefighting services, and airport security; a Fort Lauderdale Police Substation; and the John Fuhrer Downtown Heliport (DT1), the only public-use heliport in Florida. A dedicated team of 23 Community Builders provides a safe and secure environment for the 900-acre facility, manages 37 leases, fosters continued business growth for existing tenants, and continually builds community with neighbors. In addition, the City's Aviation Advisory Board makes recommendations to the City Commission regarding airport planning, development, construction, improvements, maintenance, operations, regulations, etc. With a direct economic impact of more than \$839 million, FXE creates jobs, promotes business, provides critical general aviation and emergency services, and serves as a reliever.

NEW PUBLIC WORKS 'LAUDERWORKS' WEBSITE (getting the scoop on Neighborhood Projects underway): Wondering what infrastructure improvements are underway in your neighborhood? The City of Fort Lauderdale has launched a new website that maps-out Public Works projects throughout the City. The fascinating clickable map highlights each of the projects that are underway or planned for the near future. A pull-down feature provides the project title, detailed project description, location, project phase, budget amount, Commission District and managing department. The clickable map is color-coded to indicate the type of project, such as bridges, canals, parks, roadway improvements, seawalls, stormwater, water and sewer.

Link to visit the new LauderWorks website: www.fortlauderdale.gov/LauderWorks

The LauderWorks website compliments the City's recently launched LauderStreet website which provides information about road closures, partial road closures and special events. Link to the LauderStreet website: <http://gis.fortlauderdale.gov/lauderstreet/>

Both websites are updated monthly. For more information, contact the 24-Hour Neighbor Call Center at (954) 828-8000 or visit: www.fortlauderdale.gov

RECOGNIZING AN OFFICER'S EFFORTS: Sergeant Monica Ferrer was recognized for her work in helping Fort Lauderdale obtain the designation of a Purple Heart City. Sergeant Ferrer brought this to the Commission's attention after she discovered a member of her staff was a veteran. There was an overwhelming response thus creating a proclamation "Recognizing the City of Fort Lauderdale as a Purple Heart City." The Purple Heart was the first American service award or decoration made available to soldiers and is specifically awarded to members of the United States Armed Forces who have been wounded or paid the ultimate sacrifice in combat with a declared enemy of the United States. The original Purple Heart was designated as the Badge of Military Merit and was established by George Washington in 1782. The City has a large highly decorated veteran population including many Purple Heart recipients, and appreciates the sacrifices the recipients made in defending our freedom and believe it is important that we acknowledge them for their courage and show them the honor and support they have earned. This proclamation was presented at a regular commission meeting. Thank you Sergeant Ferrer for making this possible!

GREAT AMERICAN BEACH PARTY: The Great American Beach Party returns Saturday, May 27 with rock legend Eddie Money! The event will take place from 10 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. at A1A and Las Olas Boulevard and will feature live bands, a kid's zone, classic car show, sandcastle contest, art show, military tribute and an amazing precision parachute jump by the U.S. SOCOM Para-Commandos! Take the stress out of driving and parking by using the Water Shuttle, Water Taxi or Sun Trolley to get to the beach. Look for details soon on the City website.

2017 WALK OF FAME HONOREES: One of the best parts of the Great American Beach Party is the annual Fort Lauderdale Walk of Fame Induction Ceremony. The City of Fort Lauderdale established the Walk of Fame in 2010 at the inaugural Great American Beach Party to pay tribute to the legendary Connie Francis on the 50th Anniversary of "Where the Boys Are," the 1960 film which made Fort Lauderdale an overnight sensation and a "must see" destination for visitors. Walk of Fame Honorees are recognized for their outstanding work and positive contributions to the City of Fort Lauderdale. This year's inductees are Kaye Pearson, founder of the Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show; the Motwani Family, long-time leaders in Fort Lauderdale's Tourism and Hospi-

ality industry; Dr. George L. Hanbury, former Fort Lauderdale City Manager and current President and CEO of NOVA Southeastern University; and the Zloch Brothers - Senior U.S. District Judge William, Jim and Chuck Zloch - for their judicial, business, legal and civic leadership. The Walk of Fame Induction Ceremony will take place on Saturday, May 27 at 6 p.m. immediately following Eddie Money's performance at the Great American Beach Party. The Walk of Fame is a great way to recognize the contributions of our neighbors and their integral role in building community in Fort Lauderdale.

TELEPHONE TOWN HALL MEETING: The telephone town hall meetings facilitate public access to our government and provides us with an opportunity to obtain essential input from our neighbors on a variety of services, initiatives and ongoing projects. The feedback we receive from the questions and polling results help ensure that we are focusing on the issues that matter most to our neighbors

and allocating our resources appropriately. If you are available, I will be hosting the evening of June 13 from 7 - 8 p.m. To join, simply call toll free 855-840-6970 from your home or cell phone. Each of our elected officials will host a call this year. To get more information, visit our web page:

<http://www.fortlauderdale.gov/departments/city-manager-s-office/public-affairs-office/telephone-town-hall-meetings>

OFFICE CONTACT: Robbi Uptegrove - 954-828-5033; email: ruptegrove@fortlauderdale.gov

In addition to hosting two pre-agenda meetings twice a month, I am also available to attend your HOA meetings to update your neighborhood on what is going on in the City as well as answer any questions/concerns you may have. Please contact Robbi to schedule.

EMAIL LIST: If you would like to be on our email list so that you receive information pertaining to the City - especially District 1 (i.e. news releases, meeting notices, events), please let Robbi know and she will add you.*

Drugs...Continued

While attracting hundreds of physicians, clinical therapists, psychologists and nurse practitioners who specialize in Recovery Medicine, the unique environment also drew a tidal wave of drug pushers.

Since health insurance funds treatment for the vast majority of recovery patients, unscrupulous clinic operators will jerk profits by shepherding newcomers through a lucrative battery of unnecessary tests. Since a relapse will trigger a new round of benefits after a beneficiary's coverage is exhausted, patients who fall off the wagon can double - or triple - the clinic's windfall. Not surprisingly, few operators complain when drug dealers rent a house across the street.

POLITICAL PIPEDREAMS

Many of the proposed plans to combat this nationwide epidemic are politically prompted pipedreams, such as a White House solution to "wall off Mexico", which won't prevent easily masked heroin stashed among thousands of trucks from crossing the border each day. While teaching physicians to perform a better risk assessment of patients may reduce questionable pain management prescriptions in the future, it will have little impact on the daily heroin overdoses at the heart of this crisis. Filling the prisons with drug-addicted street-level dealers may satisfy some moral imperative, but since thousands of potential replacements view such events as sterling business opportunities, it has a negligible impact on the drug trade.

To reduce fatalities, Australia, The Netherlands and Canada have implemented "Harm Reduction" policies - such as needle exchange programs and consumption facilities. Instead of jailing addicts or watching them die by the thousands, New York, California, Maryland and the City of Seattle are also considering "Consumption Facilities", sites where addicts receive clean needles and syringes and use their heroin, or other addictive drugs under the supervision of trained authorities that also provide primary medical care and immediate access to free rehab beds. Implemented in Vancouver since 2003, these "Treatment Gateways" reduce the number of addicts as well as the spread of H.I.V. and hepatitis.

An "Opiate Action Plan" was proposed in Fort Lauderdale last year by a group of addiction specialists and law enforcement officials at a forum hosted by the United Way of Broward County. In short, it proposed to educate neighborhoods about heroin and fentanyl while stocking truckloads of naloxone. In 2016, most States, including Florida, passed new laws providing for the purchase of naloxone without a prescription. Available as an intramuscular injectable or nasal spray in many Walgreens and CVS outlets, emergency admin-

istration should be accompanied by rescue breaths and a call to 911.

On May 3, 2017, after dragging his feet for years, Governor Rick Scott finally signed Executive Order 17-146, classifying Florida's opioid crisis as a public health emergency. The declaration will pump \$27 million in federal funds - and another \$27 million next year - into the state cookie jar, ostensibly for prevention, treatment and recovery services. Specifically, the grant will fund treatment modalities for the uninsured and under-insured, including \$17 million for methadone and \$3.8 million for Vivitrol (naltrexone), a drug that suppresses opioid cravings. While some of the federal funds will assist drug-addicted newborns, Scott instructed Surgeon General Celeste Philip to order a sizable supply of naloxone. The grant will also fund overdose response training, behavioral-health consultants for child-welfare workers, peer-mentoring programs and other initiatives. Since the funds will be distributed based on each jurisdiction's number of overdose deaths and estimated number of addicts, Broward should be a major beneficiary.

In his May 3 press release, Scott announced that he decided to take action "following the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) declaring a national opioid epidemic." The CDC has been calling this plague an epidemic since February 2011. Tick Tock.

Since 2010, the Justice Department has hinged a strategy on attacking two factors unique to the current crisis, the explosion of new addicts generated by the Pill Mills and the increasing availability of dirt-cheap high-purity heroin. With the Pill Mills mostly in our rear view mirror, the DEA has returned to dismantling drug pipelines.

While no one knows the extent that this new plague will burn through our communities and decimate families, a daily battle for survival is being waged on local streets. Racing from crisis to crisis, first responders will need a virtually unlimited supply of Narcan to bring people back to life and thousands of addicts will need access to treatment. As the CDC and local governments work through schools, physicians and civic programs to illuminate danger signs and recovery options, families will once again take point, and do what they must to keep one another safe. It may not be elegant, but it works.*



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June is National Men's Health Month

Know your health stats

You know your team's win-loss record by heart, but when it comes to health do you know your own statistics?

- On average, men live about 5 years less than their female counterparts
- Men have a higher death rate for most of the leading causes of death, including cancer, heart disease, diabetes and suicide
- 1 in 2 men will develop cancer in their lifetime
- Men make ½ as many physician visits for prevention as women

Want to see these stats change?

With June being National Men's Health Month, it is a great time to get your preventative health screening today. It is fast, easy and affordable. Do it for yourself and for those who count on you.

Please call **954.279.7946** or visit the Broward Health's official Facebook page and click "Follow the Man Van" to learn more.

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