



Office of the Attorney General

Efforts to End the Opioid Crisis

In February 2018, Attorney General Gurbir S. Grewal launched a new office to fight the opioid crisis: the New Jersey Coordinator for Addiction Responses and Enforcement Strategies, or NJ CARES. Under the direction of Director Sharon M. Joyce, NJ CARES is responsible for overseeing addiction-fighting efforts across the Attorney General's Office and creating partnerships with other agencies and groups committed to identifying and implementing solutions. NJ CARES is tackling the opioid crisis from all angles, including:

Holding Accountable those Who Fuel the Crisis

- **Suing opioid manufacturers who misled the public about the dangers of opioids.**

In November 2018, Attorney General Grewal and the Division of Consumer Affairs sued Janssen Pharmaceuticals for deceiving prescribers and consumers about the dangers of its opioid products, marking the third lawsuit brought by New Jersey against an opioid manufacturer and the first such case brought by New Jersey against a pharmaceutical company based in the state.

- **Bringing criminal charges against the most dangerous opioid traffickers.** The Division of Criminal Justice is aggressively pursuing those who traffic fentanyl, securing decade-long sentences against the worst offenders, doctors and other white-collar criminals who profit from the illegal diversion of opioids.

- **Revoking and suspending professional licenses from indiscriminate prescribers.**

Attorney General Grewal, through the Division of Law, has successfully petitioned the State Board of Medical Examiners to suspend or revoke the professional licenses of nearly two dozen prescribers who have recklessly disregarded their professional and ethical obligations, or subjected them to other professional discipline. These licensure actions are often taken on an emergency basis.

Facilitating Treatment and Recovery Services for those who Need them Most

- **Diverting addicted individuals to treatment.** NJ CARES is working with County Prosecutors to take a program that Attorney General Grewal began as Bergen County Prosecutor and expand it statewide: Operation Helping Hand, an innovative initiative that diverts individuals out of the criminal justice system and into substance abuse treatment. Phase One of the expansion began in June 2018, when four additional counties – Sussex, Passaic, Union and

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Morris – launched their own programs. Phase Two of the expansion began in October 2018 when NJ CARES received a \$1 million grant from the NJ Department of Health to establish or expand Operation Helping Hand programs in every county in the state.

■ **Connecting individuals in need to treatment and recovery services.** The Attorney General's Office is developing statewide "Opioid Response Teams," which serve as 24/7 teams of police, recovery coaches, and EMTs to help people in crisis.

Using Data to Solve Problems and Educate the Public

■ **Improving methods for tracking and reporting opioid prescriptions.** The Division of Consumer Affairs operates New Jersey's Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP), which tracks prescription sales of narcotic painkillers and other addictive drugs. Recent enhancements to the PMP make it easier to keep doctors, pharmacies, and law enforcement officers informed about abuse and diversion, including by integrating PMP data in electronic medical records.

■ **Building an online dashboard to better target law enforcement resources.** The Office of the Attorney General is building the Integrated Drug Awareness Dashboard (IDAD), to exchange opioid-related data between state agencies, informing how we fight opioid addiction in the future.

■ **Publishing data online to educate the public about the scope of the crisis.** Through NJ CARES's website, the Office of the Attorney General is allowing the public to track the impact of the opioid epidemic in real time on our website.

Taking Other Actions to Prevent Opioid Abuse, Addiction, and Overdose Deaths

■ **Engaging with communities across New Jersey.** Attorney General Grewal asked all 21 County Prosecutors to host public events in their counties to share information about opioids, while strengthening the relationships between law enforcement officers and the communities they serve.

■ **Promoting safe prescription drug disposal.** The Division of Consumer Affairs has promoted Project Medicine Drop (PMD), which allows people to dispose of unused prescription drugs – in a safe and environmentally friendly manner – at police department headquarters across the state. In October 2018 the Division launched a month-long, multi-county advertising campaign financed with \$30,000 in federal grant funds, urging the public to fight addiction by disposing of unused opioid medications and other prescription drugs at local PMD sites.