



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY GENERAL TENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

Stephen D. Crump, District Attorney General

MEDIA RELEASE

DISTRICT ATTORNEY GENERAL CRUMP ANNOUNCES OPIOID INITIATIVE

District Attorney General Steve Crump announced today a new initiative to address the opioid epidemic in the Tenth Judicial District. Over one million Tennesseans are in some stage of either abuse or addiction to opioids. More Tennesseans will die from an opioid overdose than in homicides or car accidents this year. Untold thousands more will suffer from this epidemic if we do not act.

General Crump stated:

“In an effort to combat this scourge, our office will take a series of steps to stem the tide locally. We will build on our strong prosecution of opioid dealers. We will look at the emerging trends and increase prosecution of those who introduce these drugs into the stream of commerce. We will utilize the civil courts to try to hold those accountable who would profit off this plague. We will work in the schools and civic clubs to increase awareness and encourage prevention. Treatment is a necessary part of the solution and we will start looking for funding for local treatment options to help those already trapped in addiction.”

The initiative will have five components:

1. **Increased prosecution for dealers.** Our office will continue to punish the “street dealers” of opioids. We have been doing that for years and we will continue that practice. We will work with our federal partners as part of the Opioid Fraud and Abuse Detection Unit to be more effective in these prosecutions. Our Drug and Violent Crime Task Force will begin to aggressively pursue health care providers who seek to make a profit off these drugs and the addictions they create. The vast majority of health care providers are responsible and make sound professional decisions about opioids. They have nothing to worry about with this new initiative. We will seek advice from them and work with them to strengthen our relationships. However, those who merely seek to make a profit will find themselves

targeted. If your actions intentionally, knowingly or recklessly create opioid addicts, we will seek to prosecute you. Our office will also continue to educate law enforcement as to more effective ways to prosecute dealers.

2. **Pharmaceutical Company Liability.** Our office will be joining with other District Attorneys General by seeking civil damages from the pharmaceutical companies who have acted in violation of the law. We will be filing suit using the same theories as those which have already been filed in Tennessee's First, Second and Third Judicial Districts. All four counties of the Tenth Judicial District will be covered in this litigation, and there will be no cost to any of our counties.
3. **Work with community partners.** Our office will continue to work with our local partners such as The Bridge and the GRABB Coalition to educate and raise awareness of this problem. We will continue to work with them to heighten public awareness of the dangers of opioids. The long-term key to winning this fight is to educate our children and prevent addiction in our middle and high schools. These organizations are key to our efforts. We will seek to create alliances with the faith community and civic clubs to increase awareness as well.
4. **Create a stakeholders advisory group.** We will create an advisory panel of health care providers, educators, law enforcement and the public to help us make good public policy decisions and help allocate prosecution resources.
5. **Treatment options.** Our office will begin to advocate for and aggressively pursue funding for more local treatment options. Our community has talked about this need for years and we must make it a reality. We cannot rely on Nashville or Washington to make this happen. The people of the Tenth Judicial District can and will find a method and funding for more treatment. We will seek to increase the funding of the Tenth Judicial District Recovery Court and seek ways to intervene more in the early stages of prosecution and in the pre-charging phase as well.

This office is committed to this endeavor. We need the help of local elected officials and the public. We need the public to care enough to work with us. We need students to care enough about classmates to prevent more tragic deaths. Most importantly, we need the resolve to say that we will not sit by and simply allow this to happen.

Together, we can win this fight.