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## GOV. SCOTT'S OPIOID PROPOSAL MOVING FORWARD IN THE LEGISLATURE

**NAPLES, Fla.** – Today, Governor Rick Scott thanked Florida Senate President Joe Negron, Florida House Speaker Richard Corcoran, Senator Lizbeth Benacquisto and Representative Jim Boyd for filing legislation to combat the opioid epidemic and help Florida families. The legislation filed today, [HB 21](#), follows Governor Scott's legislative proposal made on September 26, 2017 to limit the chance of drug addiction, reduce the ability for dangerous drugs to spread in Florida's communities, give vulnerable Floridians the support they need, and ensure law enforcement officers have resources to protect Floridians impacted by opioids. A companion Senate bill will be filed in the coming days.

Governor Scott will also be including \$50 million in his recommended budget to combat opioid abuse in Florida. More details on this significant investment will be announced in the coming weeks. More information on Governor Scott's proposed legislation and \$50 million budget proposal is available [HERE](#).

Governor Scott said, "Families across our state are struggling with the pain and loss inflicted by the national opioid epidemic and today, I am proud that Senator Benacquisto and Representative Boyd are filing important legislation to help combat this terrible crisis. Last month, I announced proposed legislation and \$50 million in funding to limit the chance of drug addiction, reduce the ability for dangerous drugs to spread in Florida's communities, give vulnerable Floridians the support they need, and ensure law enforcement officers have resources to protect Floridians impacted by opioids. I know how painful substance abuse is for a family and no family in our state should experience the anguish and heartbreak that opioid abuse brings.

"We cannot be too cautious when it comes to helping families. Whether it's recovery from the devastation of Hurricane Irma, fighting against the Zika virus or combatting the opioid epidemic – we will not stop providing Floridians every resource when they need it the most."

Florida Senate President Joe Negron said, "Opioid abuse is a critical public safety issue plaguing communities across our state. I commend Senator Benacquisto for working with Governor Scott on this important issue, and am grateful to Governor Scott and all of our Senators, House Members, and other local elected officials and advocates who have worked tirelessly to explore meaningful

solutions. In the Senate, we have begun a robust and ongoing public discussion regarding providing treatment and resources for those suffering from addiction and instituting measured steps to prevent future addiction, while still respecting the rights of patients seeking medical treatment and the knowledge and skill of their physicians. I am confident that during the 2018 Legislative Session we can work together to pass comprehensive legislation that will help our state tackle this epidemic.”

Florida House Speaker Richard Corcoran said, “Opioids are tearing families and lives apart throughout our state. It is all the more insidious because many of these addictions are preventable. Under the leadership of Governor Scott, Florida will address this public health crisis at its core and do all we can to prevent new addictions and treat those who are suffering. I commend the Governor and look forward to working with him and our counterparts in the Senate to address this scourge.”

Senator Lizbeth Benacquisto said, “The opioid epidemic continues to cause pain and death in our communities each and every day, and we must act now. I'm proud to work with Governor Scott and Representative Boyd as part of the solution to this tragic problem that plagues so many individuals and families across the State of Florida. I'm hopeful that we can pass legislation that truly helps stem the tide of addiction to opiates and help folks move toward a successful recovery.”

Representative Jim Boyd said, “The opioid crisis is one of the most horrific issues I've ever witnessed. It's destroying our families and destroying our communities, but together we will prevail. I'm honored to continue this fight against opioid abuse and thankful for such strong leadership from our Governor and Speaker in combating this epidemic.”

This year, Governor Scott has taken the following action to combat the opioid epidemic in Florida:

- Directed the Department of Children and Families (DCF), the Department of Health (DOH) and the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) to meet with communities in Palm Beach, Manatee, Duval and Orange Counties to identify additional strategies to fight the rising opioid usage cases in Florida.
- Signed [Executive Order 17-146](#) allowing the state to immediately draw down more than \$27 million in federal grant funding through the Opioid State Targeted Response Grant. This funding is distributed to communities across the state to deal with the opioid epidemic.
- Directed State Surgeon General Dr. Celeste Philip to declare a [Public Health Emergency](#) and issue a standing order for Naloxone in response to the opioid epidemic in Florida.
- Signed HB 477 which combats synthetic opioid drug abuse by enhancing penalties for the abuse of fentanyl and its derivatives. To view the transmittal letter, click [HERE](#).
- Propose major legislation and more than \$50 million as part of his 2018-2019 recommended budget to combat opioid abuse in Florida. More information [HERE](#).

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