



OFFICE OF THE LT. GOVERNOR
EVELYN SANGUINETTI

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Contact

Rich Carter

Rich.Carter@illinois.gov

Governor's Opioid Task Force embarks on listening tour around Illinois

CHICAGO (October 11, 2017) –The Governor's new Opioid Prevention and Intervention Task Force is touring the state this week visiting communities in search of information and partners to help implement the state's Opioid Action Plan to curtail the growing opioid overdose epidemic in Illinois.

Co-chaired by Lt. Gov. Evelyn Sanguinetti and Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) Director Nirav D. Shah, the task force was created by Governor Rauner's executive order last month. Another task force member and leader in the state's mission to save lives, Illinois Department of Human Services (DHS) Acting Assistant Secretary of Programs Maria Bruni, will also join the tour, which will host events in Chicago, Champaign and Mt. Vernon Oct. 11-13.

"The opioid epidemic knows no neighborhood, no color, and no class. It is not confined to alleys in urban settings, nor isolated in rural communities," Lt. Gov. Sanguinetti said. "We are traveling the state to collect research and hear stories of those impacted by this growing opioid overdose epidemic so we can take action to save lives."

In 2016, almost 1,900 people died of opioid overdose, an increase of 76 percent from 2013. The largest increase was in the number of deaths involving fentanyl, and drugs similar to fentanyl, which led to the 10-fold increase in synthetic opioid overdose deaths between 2013 and 2016.

"In traveling to different communities around the state, we hope to hear from health care providers, community organizations, people suffering or impacted by opioid use disorder, and first responders," said IDPH Director Shah. "We want to learn what resources are available in different communities across the state and how we can work together to fight the opioid epidemic. It will take all of us, in all capacities to end the crisis."

The goal of the Opioid Action Plan is to reduce the anticipated number of opioid-related deaths by one-third in three years. The Plan identifies three areas of focus: prevention, treatment/recovery, and response.

The opioid epidemic developed out of many complex and interacting factors over several years, and it will require a great deal of sustained collaborative effort to turn the tide. The State will continue to

collaborate actively with other key stakeholders, including the Illinois Opioid Crisis Response Advisory Council, to build on the Plan's framework. A copy of the plan can be found [here](#).

Video of today's Chicago hearing will be posted [here](#).

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