

RESOLUTION NO. 17-03

A RESOLUTION OF THE PALM BEACH COUNTY LEAGUE OF CITIES, INC., REQUESTING THAT GOVERNOR RICK SCOTT DECLARE A STATE OF EMERGENCY OVER THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC; PROVIDING FOR TRANSMITTAL; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

WHEREAS, the Palm Beach County League of Cities, Inc. recognizes that the heroin and prescription opioid epidemic is one of the most urgent law enforcement and public health challenges facing our country; and

WHEREAS, the Palm Beach County League of Cities, Inc. also recognizes that the heroin and prescription opioid epidemic is having a devastating impact on families and communities throughout the State of Florida, including within Palm Beach County; and

WHEREAS, opioids are a class of drugs that includes the illegal drug heroin as well as prescription power pain relievers, such as oxycodone (oxycontin), hydrocodone (vicodin), codeine, morphine, fentanyl, methadone, and many others; and

WHEREAS, on an average day in this country, health care professionals dispense more than 650,000 opioid prescriptions; and

WHEREAS, each day in this country 3,900 people initiate the nonmedical use of prescription opioids and 580 people use heroin for the first time; and

WHEREAS, each day in this country 78 people die from opioids-related overdoses; and

WHEREAS, Palm Beach County fielded over 4,000 overdose calls and had more than 500 estimated opioid deaths in 2016; and

WHEREAS, in addition to the horrific loss of life, the heroin and opioid epidemic is having a significant financial impact on local resources, with Palm Beach County Fire Rescue's costs for Narcan increasing from \$57,543.00 in fiscal year 2015 to \$205,346.00 in fiscal year 2016, and with each overdose call costing Palm Beach County Fire Rescue upwards of \$1,500.00; and

WHEREAS, there are other public costs as well, including the psychological toll on first responders. Palm Beach County police and fire departments are routinely engaging mental health professionals to assist first responders in coping with the fatigue and stress associated with responding to so many overdose-related calls and deaths; and

WHEREAS, Florida's recovery industry is now estimated at over \$1 billion, with hundreds of rehabilitation facilities and sober homes within Palm Beach County. Illegal kickbacks, insurance fraud and patient brokering are among the abuses within the industry; and

WHEREAS, while actions are being taken on a local level, including the launch of the Palm Beach County pilot program to reduce the heroin overdose death toll by providing thirty (30) emergency room patients treated for overdose symptoms with Suboxone and home

counseling to help wean them off drugs, these local actions are not enough given the potency and addictiveness of opioids; and

WHEREAS, other states in the nation have declared public health emergencies relating to the heroin and prescription opioid epidemic, including Massachusetts (2014), Virginia (2016), and Maryland (2017); and

WHEREAS, a declaration of a public health emergency in the State of Florida would raise awareness of this epidemic, would help foster a state-wide dialogue among state, county and municipal leaders, and would assist in allocating resources to better plan for and organize community prevention and overdose responses, effective treatment options, public safety enforcement, and supply reduction.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR THE PALM BEACH COUNTY LEAGUE OF CITIES, INC. THAT:

Section 1: The Board of Directors for the Palm Beach County League of Cities, Inc., strongly urges Governor Rick Scott to declare a state of emergency regarding the opioid epidemic.

Section 2: The Board of Directors hereby requests that this Resolution be sent to Governor Rick Scott, Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi, U.S. Senator Bill Nelson, U.S. Senator Marco Rubio, U.S. Congressman Brian Mast, U.S. Congressman Alcee L. Hastings, U.S. Congresswoman Lois Frankel, U.S. Congressman Ted Deutch, State Senator Bobby Powell, State Senator Jeff Clemens, State Senator Joe Negron, State Senator Kevin J. Rader, State Representative Bill Hagar, State Representative Joseph Abruzzo, State Representative MaryLynn Magar, State Representative Rick Roth, State Representative Matt Willhite, State Representative David Silvers, State Representative Al Jacquet, State Representative Lori Berman, State Representative Emily Slosberg, the Board of County Commissioners for Palm Beach County, the Palm Beach County Legislative Delegation, and the Florida League of Cities, Inc.; and further requests their support for such declaration.

Section 3: This Resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption by the Board of Directors.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 29th day of March, 2017.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF
THE PALM BEACH COUNTY
LEAGUE OF CITIES, INC.


Robert M.W. Shalhoub, President

(SEAL)

ATTEST:


Mo Thornton, Secretary/Treasurer