

DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

State of Mississippi

1101 Robert E. Lee Building
239 North Lamar Street
Jackson, MS 39201



(601) 359-1288
FAX (601) 359-6295
TDD (601) 359-6230

Diana S. Mikula - Executive Director

For More Information Contact:

Adam Moore
Director of Communications
Mississippi Department of Mental Health
Phone: (601) 359-1288

Department of Mental Health Hosts Town Hall Meeting in Rankin County

May 12, 2017 (Jackson, Miss.) – A town hall meeting in Brandon this month will address the growing impact of opioids in communities across the state. The meeting is hosted in a partnership with the Department of Mental Health, the Bureau of Narcotics, the Board of Pharmacy, and the Jackson Division of the FBI.

The meeting will be at 6:30 p.m. on May 23 at the Brandon Civic Center and include a panel with representation from all agencies, as well as representatives from across the state and Rankin County. It will also include someone who has been personally impacted by opioid addiction and the destruction it can cause. This meeting is just one in a series of town halls that will be held throughout the state in the coming months. The town halls will also share information from Governor Bryant’s Opioid and Heroin Study Task Force that is expected to release recommendations later this summer.

“In Mississippi, one in 10 people misuse prescription drugs,” said Diana Mikula, Executive Director of the Mississippi Department of Mental Health. “Opioids have a tremendous impact in all of our communities. Addiction doesn’t discriminate. It occurs in families from all walks of life.”

Understanding addiction and strong prevention efforts can be key to keeping Mississippi families safe. While prescription opioids can be obtained from doctors for legitimate needs, they can also carry their own dangers. Misuse of those drugs can lead to physical dependence and, eventually, to full-scale mental addiction when people lose the ability to stop their misuse on sheer willpower alone.

Prescription drug abuse has surged 400% in the past decade, and many teens now say it is easier to acquire prescription drugs than it is to buy beer. According to the Mississippi Bureau of Narcotics, for the past three years there were 486 reported drug overdoses in Mississippi.

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Of those reported, 394 were opioid related. In 2016, there were 3,574,662 prescriptions written and 201,224,298 dosage units dispensed for opioids in Mississippi. The Mississippi Bureau of Narcotic's 2017 Executive Summary reported there were 14 overdose deaths in Rankin County alone from 2013 through 2016.

“The partnerships we have are essential in helping us educate communities about the impact addiction is having on our state,” Mikula said. “By working together through these town hall meetings, our goal is to reduce the death and destruction caused by opioid addiction.”

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DMH is supporting a better tomorrow by making a difference in the lives of Mississippians with mental illness, substance use disorders and intellectual or developmental disabilities one person at a time.