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CITRUS COUNTY RECOGNIZES INTERNATIONAL OVERDOSE AWARENESS DAY ON AUG. 31



CONTACT:

Audrey Stasko, Public Information Officer

CitrusCommunications@FLHealth.gov

352-527-0068



While the COVID-19 pandemic continues to upend our lives, another deadly crisis wreaks havoc on Citrus County and the state. To bring awareness to the opioid epidemic, the Florida Department of Health in Citrus County (DOH-Citrus) joins community partners in recognizing International Overdose Awareness Day on Aug. 31.

This global health observance was designed to raise awareness of overdoses, end the stigma and

acknowledge the grief accompanying the deaths and permanent injuries they cause families and communities.

During 2010-2019, Citrus County averaged slightly over 37 deaths each year due to an opioid-related overdose. In 2020, that number nearly doubled to 65, marking it the deadliest year yet from opioid-related overdoses. In response, the Citrus County Opioid Task Force was formed in 2021 and comprises government, health, law enforcement and treatment entities.

“Overdose deaths are a major concern in Citrus County and there's prevention efforts that we can bring to our community to save lives,” said Todd Hockert, DOH-Citrus Opioid Overdose Data to Action (OD2A) Grant Facilitator. “That’s exactly what the Citrus County Opioid Task Force plans to do,” said Hockert. “But it has to start with putting an end to the stigma that prevents people affected by opioid use disorder from getting the help they need.”

The local task force aims to provide behavioral health resources and tools to individuals, families and community partners to reduce opioid-related overdose deaths and link those in need to services.

For information about the OD2A initiative through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, visit www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/od2a.

For more information about DOH-Citrus, go to www.CitrusCountyHealth.org or follow us on Twitter at [@FLHealthCitrus](https://twitter.com/FLHealthCitrus).

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