



**SENATOR JACK LATVALA**  
16th District

## THE FLORIDA SENATE

Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1100

**COMMITTEES:**  
Appropriations, *Chair*  
Appropriations Subcommittee on the  
Environment and Natural Resources  
Commerce and Tourism  
Environmental Preservation and Conservation  
Rules

**JOINT COMMITTEE:**  
Joint Legislative Budget Commission,  
*Alternating Chair*

August 28, 2017

The Honorable Rick Scott, Governor  
State of Florida  
400 South Monroe, PL 04  
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Dear Governor Scott,

I urge you to extend Executive Order Number 17-178, relating to the opioid crisis in Florida, and provide immediate funding to address this issue.

I, along with Senate President Negrón, Senator García, and Senator Rader, recently participated in a discussion in Palm Beach County on the opioid crisis. Many of the individuals on the front line tell me they have never experienced a crisis of this magnitude. Florida's leaders must develop a statewide strategic action plan. Professional clinical programs coupled with sustained social services are proven to work; however, targeted strategic plans fail if the financial resources necessary to implement them are inadequate.

The opioid public health crisis has resulted in over 33,000 deaths nationally in 2015, of which nearly 3,900 were Floridians (roughly 11 Floridians each day). There have been reports that suggest 14 Floridians have died every day in the first half of this year due to opioids, which is higher than the number of Floridians we lost per day at the height of the pill mill crisis. If this trend continues, by the time the Legislature passes a budget in March 2018, over 2,700 more Floridians could die. Florida's citizens cannot wait until then for more financial resources to combat this public health crisis.

Recently, the media reported that Florida has exhausted its accumulation of \$20 million of federal funds. The Legislature allocated these accumulated funds to providers across the state to increase the capacity of our mental health and substance abuse system. Now that these accumulated funds have been exhausted, the continued sustainability of these capacity-building efforts is now in grave jeopardy. Additional funding is needed immediately to kick start Florida's efforts to combat the negative effects of this public health crisis until the Legislature returns in January to pass a balanced budget that provides long-term financial resources. Long-term solutions must be bold, and this crisis will not be resolved solely through financial investments. We must provide the proper financial resources to those communities across Florida that have been struggling with this crisis for many years and join together to help end the stigma of addiction.

**REPLY TO:**

- 26133 U.S. Highway 19 North, Suite 201, Clearwater, Florida 33763 (727) 793-2797 FAX: (888) 263-7847
- 412 Senate Office Building, 404 South Monroe Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1100 (850) 487-5016

Senate's Website: [www.flsenate.gov](http://www.flsenate.gov)

**JOE NEGRON**  
President of the Senate

**ANITERE FLORES**  
President Pro Tempore

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I urge you in the strongest terms to continue to lead on this issue just as you have with the threat posed by the Zika arbovirus, where last year you committed over \$61 million of general revenue funds from our state reserves. Through the efforts coordinated by yourself and Surgeon General Philip, local governments were able to respond effectively to the emerging Zika threat, and thankfully there has been no loss of life and no locally acquired cases thus far this year. This successful trend will hopefully continue as proof that when the proper resources are timely delivered, a looming crisis can be averted. I am asking for approximately one-third of that amount to begin to address what many consider to be a more serious and immediate problem that has been growing for years into what is now a significant public health crisis.

I urge you to join me in calling on our leaders in Washington to follow through on their promise of addressing the opioid public health crisis. It has been several weeks since the President declared the opioid crisis a national emergency; however, a formal declaration has not yet been signed and sent to Congress. As you are aware, this is a critical next step in directing millions of dollars towards expanding treatment facilities, supplying police officers and first responders with anti-overdose remedies, and waiving federal regulations such as the rule that restricts where Medicaid recipients receive addiction treatment.

While I very much appreciate the \$27.2 million in federal grant funding for this fiscal year and next from the federal government, I am acutely aware that these federal funds can only be used for specific opioid-related purposes, including medication-assisted treatment for addiction, training and resources for first responders, and better access to overdose treatment. As such, I recognize that there are more broad-based issues that need to be addressed in the context of our state's response to the opioid public health crisis.

For this reason, I am urging you to use your executive authority under Chapter 252, Florida Statutes, in extending the existing Opioid Executive Order Number 17-178, set to expire in a few days, to use the state's reserve funds for the following specific opioid-related direct care services:

▪ Detox services	\$ 5,000,000
▪ Residential treatment	\$ 9,000,000
▪ Outpatient Treatment and Recovery Support	\$ 3,000,000
▪ Specialized Services	\$ 600,000
▪ Prevention	\$ 2,400,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$20,000,000</b>

The Department of Children and Families, in conjunction with its contracted managing entities, should direct these funds to those locations in the state with the most immediate need for the services listed above as evidenced by the magnitude of opioid deaths in the affected communities (see attached spreadsheet for an explanation of these services).

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The opioid crisis presents an existential threat to the people of our state as entire generations are quickly being lost, or unable to meaningfully contribute as productive members of our society and economy. We as leaders of this state cannot idly sit back and continue to watch the deterioration of our society as this public health crisis unravels the progress that began in 2010 – spearheaded by the leadership of Attorney General Bondi and others – through the crackdown of pill mills and unscrupulous prescribing patterns of bad actors where we initially saw a decline in the death rate but unfortunately has reversed course since 2014. While the unfettered proliferation of opioids through pill mills was vastly reduced, individuals then turned to the black market for alternative forms such as heroin, and now new formulations of synthetic opioids, such as fentanyl, are a real threat.

As the upcoming 2018 Session quickly approaches and committee meetings begin in a few weeks, know that I, as Chairman of the Senate Committee on Appropriations, am committed to addressing funding issues specific to the opioid public health crisis throughout the budgets of the various Subcommittees. I look forward to working with you, President Negron, the entire Senate, Speaker Corcoran alongside the rest of our partners in the House of Representatives, the Surgeon General, the Attorney General, and stakeholders from across our state to end the opioid crisis in short order.

I commend your leadership on tackling this crisis that began with issuing the first Opioid Executive Order in May, and continued with you signing into law measures cracking down on fraudulent practices in sober home operations, requiring pharmacists to log prescriptions to the state's Prescription Drug Monitoring Program database by the end of the next business day, and establishing a mandatory three-year minimum sentence for fentanyl distributors.

As we can both agree, much more work is needed and I believe that the existing efforts of our local first responders and treatment providers can be bolstered by the immediate release of \$20 million from the state's reserves. This investment will have a positive return and impact on jobs and our economy by countering the tremendous loss of productivity resulting from the opioid public health crisis. Thank you in advance for your favorable consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jack Latvala". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Senator Jack Latvala  
Chairman of the Senate Committee on Appropriations

## Substance Abuse Treatment and Prevention Services

Total Requested Funding

\$20,000,000

	Services	Explanation of Service	Funding
1	<b>DETOX BEDS &amp; ADDICTION RECEIVING FACILITY BEDS</b>		<b>\$5,000,000</b>
	This funding will provide for additional inpatient detoxification beds with linkage to less restrictive community placements. The additional detoxification beds will reduce the existing waiting lists for detox services. The average cost of a detox bed is \$278 per day.		
2	<b>SHORT-TERM RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT BEDS</b>		<b>\$9,000,000</b>
	This funding will provide for residential treatment beds that will be used for individuals who have begun Medication Assisted Treatment or have been in a more restrictive level of substance abuse treatment. This will provide a safe transitional setting for these individuals while they become stabilized in treatment or while they are working to fully return to the community. Availability of these beds will serve 2 purposes. It will allow the provider close access to the consumer, in order to monitor the early stages of treatment. In turn, the individual receiving treatment will have greater access to a full array of the supports needed to be successful in their recovery from substance abuse. This transitional housing will reduce relapse and thus repeated admission to more costly in-patient detoxification programs. Residential bed costs range from \$47 to \$274 per day, depending on the intensity of care needed.		
3	<b>OUTPATIENT TREATMENT AND RECOVERY SUPPORT</b>		<b>\$3,000,000</b>
	<p><b>Housing:</b> Expansion of housing vouchers and supportive housing services will provide housing for individuals with substance use disorders who are high utilizers and are in need of care coordination.</p> <p><b>Care coordination:</b> This provides a system of care to ensure that individuals are linked to community treatment providers, community supports, follow-up services or other appropriate supports to ensure that their treatment needs are properly addressed and provide for a smooth transition between levels of care in order to be properly integrated into the community and avoid acute crisis services, re-hospitalization, or re-arrest.</p> <p><b>Peer Recovery Supports:</b> Peer consultants within the licensed treatment centers can reduce stigma, increase consumer engagement in treatment, and assist individuals in the recovery process. Peer consultants can help hundreds of individuals sustain sobriety, access employment and housing resources, and develop natural supports.</p>		
4	<b>SPECIALIZED SERVICES FOR TARGET POPULATIONS</b>		<b>\$600,000</b>
	This funding will provide outreach activities and therapy services for targeted populations. An example would be gender-specific substance abuse treatment for substance-using pregnant women to promote healthy, substance-free babies. Another example would be evidenced-based therapy services that address trauma and addiction simultaneously.		
5	<b>PREVENTION SERVICES (EDUCATION &amp; OUTREACH)</b>		<b>\$2,400,000</b>
	This funding will target prevention services to youth and families. Funds may be used to implement an educational media campaign on the dangers of using Opioids and other drugs and to promote education in the schools.		