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Attorney General's Office Looking to Appoint Statewide Substance Use Response Working Group Members

Carson City, NV – Today, Nevada Attorney General Aaron D. Ford announced that he will appoint eight members for his Substance Use Response Working Group. The Nevada Legislature recently passed [Assembly Bill \(AB\) 374](#), creating this Working Group within the Attorney General's Office.

The purpose of the Working Group is to develop recommendations to improve Nevada's substance use prevention and response efforts. Appointed members will study evidence-based strategies in prevention and intervention, and evaluate the effect of substance use on Nevada's criminal justice system, educational institutions, and the economy.

“Substance abuse is not an easy problem to tackle, and I’m looking for Nevadans who are experts in their field to join me in this important effort,” **said AG Ford**. “Health challenges, job loss, food insecurity, and isolation may be contributing to the spike in opioid overdoses both here at home and all over the country this past year, and I’m eager to work alongside members of my Substance Use Response Working Group to educate the community and improve our response to opioid abuse.”

According to a [February, 2021 report](#) by the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Analytics, Nevada saw a larger number of opioid overdose deaths in 2020 at 484 than what was previously considered the peak in 2011 of 460 overdose deaths. Nevada is not alone in this increase due to a variety of factors and stressors including those associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020, Nevada experienced a 40% increase in opioid related overdose deaths than in 2019, increasing from 374 to 484. The largest increase in overdose deaths was attributed to synthetic opioids, primarily fentanyl, with 246 of the 484 overdose deaths involving synthetic opioids.

Synthetic opioid overdose deaths now account for over 50% of opioid related overdose deaths in Nevada. Fentanyl related overdose deaths increased six-fold since 2010 from 39 to 246 in 2020. Fentanyl is now found in a range of illicit substances, including methamphetamine and pressed counterfeit pills. Most individuals are unaware that their drug supply may contain fentanyl. In 2020, the Nevada High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area saw a 28% increase in drug related overdose deaths in Nevada. Methamphetamine continues to be a top drug threat to users in Nevada, and fentanyl related overdoses are significantly increasing at an alarming rate.

The Working Group will consist of the following members:

- A healthcare provider with expertise in medicine for the treatment of substance use disorders;
- An advocate for persons who have substance use disorders and family members of such persons;
- One person who is in recovery from a substance use disorder;
- One person who provides services relating to the treatment of substance use disorders;
- One representative of a substance use disorder prevention coalition;
- One representative of a program to reduce the harm caused by substance misuse;
- One representative of a hospital; and
- One representative of a school district.

Members are appointed for 2-year terms and not compensated for their time.

Those interested in serving should email our office at AGInquiries@ag.nv.gov with their name, contact information, and indicate which category they are eligible for.

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