

John Adams -- Statewide Substance Abuse and Overdose Crisis Policy Proposal

The Attorney General, working closely with law enforcement to prosecute enforcement actions in a range of areas impacting our citizens, has a critical leadership position in fighting the drug overdose crisis in our communities. John Adams has identified three elements for a successful strategy to fight this epidemic.

1. Prevention and Education
2. Treatment
3. Enforcement

Prevention and Education

Establish the Attorney General's Virginia Substance Abuse Coordination Center (VSAC) to engage all available resources for community efforts.

Mobilize law enforcement, community, and other resources for the effort while working with the Governor and Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security to coordinate the law enforcement response.

Facilitate access to funding and grants by dedicating staff for grant-writing and dedicate office resources to solicit, receive, and distribute funding to appropriate treatment and prevention programs across the Commonwealth.

Act as central clearinghouse for substance abuse program funding and grant management while proactively researching and recommending new funding sources and worthy recipients for innovative prevention and treatment programs.

Partner with early-childhood education and prevention efforts to develop programs geared for pre-adolescent children.

Provide guidance and expertise for community and legislative efforts in working with the General Assembly and communities to identify non-partisan, common-sense changes to Virginia law for maximizing treatment, prevention, and enforcement efforts.

Treatment

Create a culture of compassion and help the public to understand that implementing an effective, lasting treatment methodology starts with the recognition that addiction is a powerful chronic disease that requires long-term disease management.

Coordinate treatment and recovery options with other state agencies, including the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, the Department of Medical Assistance Services, and the Virginia Department of Health.

View treatment as an effective law enforcement tool for demand reduction.

Allocate Attorney General settlement funds to expanding treatment and recovery options.

Help community-based organizations and first-responders to identify available treatment resources.

Provide support for people with the disease of addiction by work with state, federal, and local partners to help people with the disease of addiction to rebuild their self-worth through access to treatment and recovery programs, support meetings, and employment opportunities.

Enforcement

The Attorney General has the unique opportunity to coordinate law enforcement efforts between multiple jurisdictions and state agencies. Efforts in this arena should include:

Resources should be devoted to tackling the organizations and individuals responsible for bringing these poisons into our communities by working hand-in-hand with state police and local law enforcement authorities to identify and develop the best strategies for combatting the unique trafficking threats facing their communities.

Support legislative efforts to enhance Virginia's laws for holding traffickers tied to drug overdoses accountable, strengthening Virginia's laws for prosecuting drug traffickers tied to drug overdoses, and imposing significant sentences. Dealers who kill our fellow citizens must be dealt with accordingly.

Develop a Multi-Jurisdiction Grand Jury ("MJGJ") Drug Task Force which allows localities to reach across jurisdictional lines and provide a coordinated regional approach to targeting and dismantling the traffickers involved in the illicit distribution of opioids and other illegal drugs.

Coordinate the creation of Multi-Jurisdiction Drug Treatment Courts to reduce the incidence of drug use, drug addiction, family separation due to parental substance abuse, and drug-related crimes.

Implement and enhance public health data collection and analysis. On-the-ground data is critical for understanding what is going on in our communities and quickly responding to a deadly drug outbreak (such as fentanyl) before it claims several lives.

Partner with the Department of Medical Assistance Services, contracted Managed Care Organizations, and the Prescription Monitoring Program to utilize data analysis to identify high-risk practitioners and users for targeted enforcement and intervention actions.

Use these same sources to provide law enforcement, public health, prevention, and treatment professionals with access to up-to-date trend analysis, helping our communities to stay ahead of emerging trends and take steps before the crises escalates.

Provide experienced prosecution resources for state and federal efforts. Employ a team of experienced prosecutors with subject-matter expertise to be on call for state and federal prosecution authorities dealing with particularly pressing drug trafficking and overdose problems.