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## Palm Beach County Approves Plans to Combat Opioid Epidemic and Human Trafficking; Establishes Paid Parental Leave Policy for Employees

On April 4, Palm Beach County Commissioner Melissa McKinlay, along with her fellow County Commissioners, voted to take immediate steps to combat the opioid epidemic. Board members approved a report entitled Opioid Crisis: Palm Beach County's Response, which contains numerous action items to address the crisis, and committed up to \$1 million this year to implement treatment and staffing expansion in the service of this effort.

"Tasha McCraw, the daughter of my former aide, Johnnie Easton, lost her life to opioid addiction, and I'm fighting this battle in her memory," Commissioner McKinlay said. "Palm Beach County's actions send a strong signal to the governor and legislature of just how serious we are to put an end to the numerous tragedies we are seeing day after day. It's time for the state to recognize the severity of this epidemic and join us in our fight."

In 2016, close to 600 people died of opioid-related overdoses in Palm Beach County, and spending on naloxone, a drug that can reverse opioid overdoses, cost Palm Beach County Fire Rescue over \$200,000, up from \$18,000 in 2012.

Commissioners approved an initiative that aims to reduce human trafficking by training staff on its signs and conducting awareness campaigns to educate the public.

"Human trafficking is one of the most heinous crimes imaginable," Commissioner McKinlay said, "and by maximizing our existing County resources and partnerships we are going to build upon our ongoing effort to eradicate it."

Additionally, a paid parental leave policy for County employees was approved. Employees with at least one year of service will receive six weeks leave, concurrent with Family Medical Leave (FMLA), at 100% of the employee's base salary for the birth, adoption, or fostering of a child.

"As a parent, I've experienced first-hand the emotional and financial challenges that come with not having paid leave to take care of a newborn," Commissioner McKinlay said. "I'm grateful that our employees will now have this much-needed security during such a critical time."

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