



Commonwealth of Kentucky Justice & Public Safety Cabinet

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Kentucky Justice Secretary John Tilley Testifying to Congress on the Opioid Crisis

Secretary Tilley scheduled to speak to U.S. Energy and Commerce subcommittee on Wednesday

FRANKFORT, Ky. (July 11, 2017) – Kentucky Justice Secretary John Tilley will testify to a U.S. Congressional committee on Wednesday about state efforts to combat the deadly opioid crisis, which claimed more than 1,400 lives in the Commonwealth last year.

Secretary Tilley is scheduled to appear before the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations for the House Energy and Commerce Committee. The hearing, entitled “Combating the Opioid Crisis: Battles in the States” will begin at 10 a.m. It can be viewed live on the [committee’s website](#) or on its [YouTube page](#).

“This a national crisis that has inflicted tremendous suffering on Kentucky families,” Secretary Tilley said. “That’s why it’s imperative to develop a comprehensive, nationwide response that builds on the best strengths of the states and the federal government. Kentucky stands ready to work with all of our partners across the country to beat back this scourge.”

Lethal overdoses claimed more than 1,400 lives in Kentucky last year, a 7.4 percent increase from 2015. Fentanyl, a synthetic opioid that is up to 50 times more potent than heroin, was a factor in 623 deaths, while heroin contributed to 456 deaths.

The subcommittee is hearing testimony from several officials from other states, including Rebecca Boss, director of the Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals in Rhode Island; Brian Moran, secretary of Virginia Public Safety and Homeland Security; and Maryland Lt. Gov. Boyd Rutherford. The panel will discuss challenges in combating opioids and opportunities for the federal government to assist. Kentucky is considered a national leader in the fight.

Last week, Gov. Matt Bevin announced a new public awareness campaign that highlights the dangers of opioid abuse and encourages Kentuckians to join in the fight to preserve lives. The “Don’t Let Them Die” campaign kicked off with a statewide advertising drive and a website with information about opioids, treatment and naloxone. It’s one of several initiatives underway.

Earlier this year, the Kentucky legislature passed House Bill 333 earlier, providing flexibility for the state to schedule new fentanyl analogues as they arrive on the streets. The bill also limits opioid prescriptions for acute pain to a three-day supply unless a doctor provides written justification in medical records for a larger amount.

Gov. Bevin and the General Assembly also worked together in 2016 to increase funding for anti-drug efforts. The state budget allocates \$15.7 million to combat opioids in the current fiscal year, up from \$10 million the previous year. Another \$16.3 million has been allocated for fiscal year 2018

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