

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



National Sheriffs' Association Launches Nationwide Campaign to Help Communities Confront Substance Use Disorder With Knowledge, Not Stigma

Sheriffs record public service announcements emphasizing prevention, effective treatment, and recovery

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — The National Sheriffs' Association launched the nationwide Substance Use Disorder Education Campaign, featuring sheriffs from across the country delivering a clear message about substance use disorder: Prevention works. Treatment is effective. Recovery is possible.

Fourteen sheriffs recorded television, radio, and digital public service announcements that will be distributed to broadcast stations, digital platforms, and communities nationwide.

Participating sheriffs include:

- Juan Figueroa, Ulster County, NY
- Pete Herron, Montgomery County, NC
- Heath Jackson, Escambia County, AL
- Brian Kozak, Laramie County, WY
- Mike Mastronardy, Ocean County, NJ
- Garry McFadden, Mecklenburg County, NC
- Troy Morton, Penobscot County, ME
- Jim Prouty, Union County, SD
- Jim Quattrone, Chautauqua County, NY
- Kevin Schneider, Polk County, IA
- John Ward, Hardin County, KY
- Troy Wellman, Moody County, SD
- Paul Arteta, Orange County, NY
- Sheriff (ret.) Justin Smith, Executive Director and CEO National Sheriffs' Association

The public service announcements are available for viewing and sharing at:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/18xWOvJeFuK_-7X5sUI7TEckPMtFh63OZ?usp=sharing

The campaign urges communities to respond to substance use disorder with knowledge, prevention, treatment, recovery and support, not blame or stigma.

“Sheriffs see the effects of substance use disorder every day, in homes, on patrol, during emergency calls, in our jails and in our courts,” said Sheriff Troy Wellman of Moody County, South Dakota, president of the National Sheriffs’ Association. “We have a responsibility to enforce the law and protect the public. We also know communities are safer when people and families receive accurate information and effective support before a crisis becomes an arrest, an overdose or a tragedy.”

Substance use disorder continues to affect families and communities across the country. Nearly 80,000 Americans died from drug overdoses in 2024, according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. More than 91 percent of those deaths were unintentional, underscoring the importance of prevention, education and early intervention.

Access to treatment also remains a major challenge. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, more than 52 million Americans age 12 or older needed substance use treatment in 2024, but only about one in five received it.

“Too often, law enforcement becomes involved only after a family has run out of options or does not know where to turn,” said Sheriff (ret.) Justin Smith, executive director and CEO of the National Sheriffs’ Association. “This campaign is designed to reach people sooner. Asking for help is not a failure. Treatment can work, and recovery is possible. Better information can help prevent the next emergency call, jail booking or overdose.”

Sheriffs and deputies frequently encounter people experiencing substance use disorders, mental health challenges or both. In many communities, jails have become one of the places where the effects of these complex issues are most visible.

The campaign calls for stronger collaboration among law enforcement, corrections, courts, healthcare providers, treatment professionals, recovery organizations and other community partners.

“Law enforcement cannot solve this crisis alone,” Smith said. “Progress requires public safety, healthcare, treatment and recovery organizations to work across traditional boundaries. When those systems work together, they can reduce repeat involvement with the justice system, strengthen families and make communities safer.”

The Substance Use Disorder Education Campaign is the National Sheriffs’ Association’s second major nationwide public service campaign this year. An earlier campaign

mobilized sheriffs across the country to help residents recognize and prevent online scams and fraud.

The fraud and scam prevention campaign has generated:

- 3,906 television and radio airings
- More than 8 million audience impressions
- \$710,847 in earned media value
- Documented airplay on at least 72 individual stations nationwide

Participating sheriffs extended the campaign beyond the public service announcements by producing dozens of opinion columns, social media posts, local news stories, and community events in their counties and media markets.

“Sheriffs understand that public safety begins with informed communities,” Wellman said. “Our fraud campaign demonstrated what can happen when local sheriffs deliver trusted information directly to the public. We are bringing that same national model to substance use disorder, helping families replace stigma with knowledge and encouraging people to seek support before the situation becomes a crisis.”

The new public service announcements encourage residents to learn the signs of substance use disorder, speak openly with their families and support prevention, treatment and recovery efforts in their communities.

The campaign is part of the National Sheriffs’ Association’s broader effort to provide sheriffs, deputies and communities with education and training related to opioids and substance use disorder.

Communities seeking opioid or substance use education and training can learn more at www.sheriffs.org/opioideducation.

People struggling with substance use disorder and the families who care about them are not alone. Prevention works. Treatment is effective. Recovery is possible.

About the National Sheriffs’ Association

The National Sheriffs’ Association is one of the largest associations of law enforcement professionals in the United States, representing more than 3,000 elected sheriffs across the nation and maintaining a total membership of more than 10,000. NSA is a nonprofit organization dedicated to raising the level of professionalism among sheriffs, deputies and others working in law enforcement, public safety and criminal justice. Throughout its history, NSA has also served as an information resource for law enforcement agencies, state governments and the federal government.

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