



Director's Update

As we enter Fall, I want to provide you with some updates related to the work of the Kentucky Opioid Abatement Advisory Commission and staff. In the last few months, we have made significant progress in several areas.

One of the most noteworthy actions relates to the Commission's commitment to supporting prevention efforts throughout the Commonwealth. In September, Attorney General Russell Coleman made a request to the Commission to allocate \$3.6 million over two years to support a youth prevention initiative, which includes the **Better Without It™** education campaign. After receiving a presentation by Attorney General Coleman and the creative team behind the campaign, the Commission made a unanimous vote to support the effort. This initiative is based on three pillars. The first pillar is the **Better Without It™** campaign, which will target Kentuckians between the ages of 13 and 26 and be shared on social media, streaming platforms, college campuses and through partnerships with influencers to encourage positive youth development. The second pillar is the promotion of school-based programs across the Commonwealth to help weave together the "patchwork" of programs in use. And the third pillar is to, as Attorney General Coleman said, "elevate and draw attention to the ongoing work of this commission and our partners in youth prevention." In the coming months you will hear more about this initiative as we work with partners from across the Commonwealth to support young Kentuckians and their families.

In late July, we launched new efforts in our accountability process by conducting visits to several grantee organizations. Since that time, staff and Commissioners have visited 11 organizations to see firsthand how funds are being used. These visits are integral in ensuring settlement money is being used appropriately. You can anticipate hearing more about these visits in these updates and end of year report.

I'm pleased to announce that a Request for Information was recently published to solicit ways in which the Commission could use its resources and authorities to support the development of new or innovative interventions. This request will help the Commission take a broad look at new and innovative treatments and technologies that could be brought to our Commonwealth. You can find the request [here](#) by searching for opioid under key words.

We also are very excited about the SOLD OUT Kentucky Opioid Symposium October 21 and 22 at the Kentucky International Convention Center in Louisville. This event will bring together people from across the Commonwealth working to eradicate the opioid crisis, and it will feature two days full of information on best practices in recovery, prevention and treatment, grant writing workshops, networking, and inspiration.

It also is my privilege to share with you that Debbie Rains has joined the Commission to fill our open position. We are looking forward to her joining us in this important work and sharing her perspective as a parent who lost her son to drug addiction. Many of you know Debbie from her work in this field and she will ensure we continue to hear different perspectives in combating the devastating impact of opioids on our Commonwealth.



In closing, I want to bring up one small change you might have notice in our recent communications and outreach. We have updated the look of our logo and added a cardinal to the design. As some of you know, in addition to being our state bird, cardinals also have long been a symbol representing loved ones no longer with us. According to the Farmers' Almanac, "It is common folklore that a visit from a cardinal represents a sign from a loved one who has passed." In this spirit, we have added a cardinal to our logo to remember and honor those who lost their life during this opioid crisis and to show support to their families and loved ones.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chris Evans". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Chris Evans
Executive Director
Kentucky Opioid Abatement Advisory Commission