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UNA to hold town hall on opioid addiction

By Mary Sell Montgomery Bureau Aug 31, 2017

An opioid and addiction awareness town hall meeting is planned for late September at the University of North Alabama.

The event is free and from 4 to 6 p.m. Sept. 27 in Norton Auditorium.

State Attorney General Steve Marshall, Commissioner of the Alabama Department of Mental Health Lynn Beshear, acting State Health Officer Scott Harris, state Sen. Tim Melson, R-Florence, CEO of Riverbend Center for Mental Health Bryan Libell, and chair of UNA's Counselor Education Department Quinn Pearson are expected to participate in the panel discussion.

State Rep. Johnny Mack Morrow, D-Red Bay, is teaming up with UNA to hold the meeting, according to a press release from the school.

Gov. Kay Ivey in early August created the Alabama Opioid Overdose and Addiction Council. The order changes the name of the Alabama Council on Opioid and Addiction, established by former Gov. Robert Bentley, and adds eight members to the group.

According to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, of Alabama's 736 reported drug overdose deaths in 2015, 282 were caused by opioids. The data also shows that Alabama doctors in 2012 wrote 1.43 prescriptions for opioid pain relievers per person — a rate higher than any other state.

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