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Alabama council to combat opioid crisis

Posted: Aug 22, 2017 3:00 PM CST
Updated: Aug 22, 2017 3:00 PM CST

By WALA Webstaff

ALABAMA (WALA) - In an effort to combat the growing opioid epidemic sweeping the nation, Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey has created a council to face the crisis head-on.

The Centers for Disease Control says Alabama has the highest level of prescription opioid use in the nation. More than 5 million prescriptions for pain pills were written in 2015.

Higher opioid prescribing puts patients at risk for addiction and overdose.

Physicians say opioids change a person's brain chemistry which can lead to misuse.

Dr. Marianne Saitz of AltaPointe Health Systems said, "A normal brain can release its own dopamine and endorphins the pleasure chemicals. When you are using an opioid for an extended period of time you brain doesn't release the chemical on its own so the only way to get pleasure is to continue to take it so it reinforces the need to take it."

if you or someone you know is struggling with an opioid addiction, help is available. You can call Altapointe's access to care, [Carepointe](#), at (251) 450-2211.

Halie Jones of AltaPointe Health Systems said "Everybody probably has at least one person they know who is either actively in addiction or been addicted in recovery or has been affected by it. There is no way to escape it. It's everywhere. It's not going away, unless we actually look at it and start talking about it."

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