



SUBMITTED PHOTO

State Representative Anthony Forlini, right, R-Harrison Township, sitting with Judge Linda Davis, speaks at a state House committee hearing regarding drug abuse last year.

Local officials named to Snyder's opioid task force

By Macomb Daily Staff

Two Macomb County officials have been named to a task force created by Gov. Rick Snyder to combat prescription and opioid drug abuse.

Judge Linda Davis of 41B District Court in Clinton Township and state Representative Anthony Forlini, R-Harrison Township, are among 21 officials from throughout the state appointed to the Michigan Prescription Drug and Opioid Abuse Task Force.

The task force's chairman is Lt. Gov. Brian Calley. Attorney General Bill Schuette and Nick Lyon, director of the state Department of Health and Human Services, also will have leadership roles, according to a press release from the governor.

"Prescription drug and opioid addiction has quadrupled the number of unintentional drug deaths in our state since 1999, and we must come together to reverse this trend before more Michiganders are hurt," Calley said in the release.

Opioids are powerful pain killers that are highly addictive and often lead to heroin abuse and fatal overdoses, officials said.

The task force will examine trends, evaluate strategic options and develop a statewide plan by fall 2015, officials said. The 2016 fiscal budget, which starts Oct. 1,

includes \$1.5 million to address the issue.

Davis is president and co-founder of Fraser-based Families Against Narcotics and presides over her court's drug docket. Forlini pushed for and sponsored legislation that mandated and expanded the use of Narcan, an opioid antidote that can stop an overdose.

Other members include Mike Zimmer, director of Michigan Licensing and Regulatory Affairs; Kriste Etue, director of the Michigan State Police; state Senate Minority Leader Jim Ananich; state Sen. Tonya Schuitmaker; state Rep. Andy Schor; Cass County Prosecutor Victor Fitz; Detroit Police Chief James Craig; Marquette County Sheriff Mike Lovelace; Spencer Johnson, president of Michigan Health and Hospital Association; Conrad Mallett, chief administrative officer of Detroit Medical Center and former Michigan Supreme Court justice and chief justice; Laurie Wesolowicz, director of pharmacy services clinical, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan; Steve Bell of the Michigan Osteopathic Association; R. Corey Waller of Spectrum Health; Larry Wagenknecht, CEO of the Michigan Pharmacists Association; Bob Lathers, CEO of Ionia County Community Mental Health; and Matt Clay, director of Health Services at Pokagon Band of Potawatomi.