



CHARLIE CRIST  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF FLORIDA  
**Office of the Governor**

THE CAPITOL  
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA 32399-0001

[www.flgov.com](http://www.flgov.com)  
850-488-7146  
850-487-0801 fax

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
JULY 21, 2009

**CONTACT:**  
GOVERNOR'S PRESS OFFICE, (850) 488-5394

**Governor Crist Applauds Comprehensive Drug Control Strategy**

*~New Plan Aimed at Protecting Florida Children and Strengthening Florida's Families ~*

[www.FLGov.com/DrugControl/](http://www.FLGov.com/DrugControl/)

[www.AdoptFlorida.org](http://www.AdoptFlorida.org)

TALLAHASSEE – Governor Charlie Crist today applauded the 2009 strategy to combat substance abuse and addiction as outlined in Florida's 2009 Drug Control Strategy report. The strategy establishes guidelines for policy recommendations for the administration based on a philosophy that promotes health and drug abuse awareness among Florida's families and communities.

"As we celebrate Florida's record setting year of adoptions this week, it is important to remain vigilant in our diversion efforts to help as many families stay together as possible. There is an undeniable link between drug and alcohol abuse and the abuse of so many of the children who end up in our state system," Governor Crist said. "In many cases, drug abuse has been the root cause of neglect, abuse, poverty and despair that leaves these precious children without homes to call their own."

Lt. Governor Jeff Kottkamp, who is tasked with operational oversight of the Governor's Office of Drug Control, outlined the strategy developed by the Governor's Office of Drug Control during the Florida Sheriffs Association Conference in Palm Beach Gardens today. Also in attendance were Department of Children and Families Secretary George Sheldon and Bill Janes, director of the Governor's Office of Drug Control. To view Florida's 2009 Drug Control Strategy, please visit [http://www.flgov.com/drugcontrol/odc\\_strategies.html](http://www.flgov.com/drugcontrol/odc_strategies.html).

"Substance abuse and addiction threaten the health and safety of Florida's children, families and communities," said Lt. Governor Jeff Kottkamp. "The dangers posed by illegal drug use, underage drinking, and prescription drug diversion and abuse require a bold and comprehensive response."

This announcement comes the day before **Explore Adoption Day**, a day dedicated to encouraging even more families to consider adoption in Florida. Research indicates there is a strong correlation between substance abuse and child abuse and neglect. For more information about **Explore Adoption Day**, visit [www.AdoptFlorida.com](http://www.AdoptFlorida.com).

## **Governor Crist Applauds Comprehensive Drug Control Strategy**

Page 2

"The more I learn about substance abuse and its effects on our society, the more I am convinced that if we could solve our substance abuse problem in Florida, we could greatly decrease the incidents of child abuse and neglect," said Secretary Sheldon. He also noted that during the past year, 32 percent of the state's child protective investigations involved at least one allegation of substance abuse by a caregiver in the family.

According to Florida Department of Children and Families, 97,442 alleged incidents of drug-related child abuse and neglect in Florida in 2008. Alleged incidents of drug-related child abuse and neglect refers to reported instances of children who suffer abuse or neglect because of parental substance abuse, and instances of children consuming alcohol or other drugs due to caregiver consent, encouragement or neglect.

Director Janes added, "Florida's new 2009 Drug Control Strategy aligns federal and community resources and coordinates the actions of diverse stakeholders to achieve priority objectives. With strong leadership and accountability, this strategy will guide our efforts to combat the illegal drug trafficking, drug diversion and substance abuse that endangers our families and communities."

The strategic vision is a future characterized by safe and healthy families and communities. The strategy contains four broad-based goals:

- Protect Florida's youth from substance abuse
- Reduce the demand for drugs
- Reduce the supply of drugs
- Reduce the harmful consequences of drug abuse and addiction

The strategy has 53 objectives, which will be assessed annually, that will move Florida towards these goals and performance measures will assist in gauging long-term impact. Highlights of the objectives include:

- Implementing pilot programs for substance abuse and child abuse and neglect prevention focused on children in or at risk of entering foster care.
- Screening all children entering foster and relative care for possible Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD).
- Reducing out-of-home care in the state system by 50 percent.

Recognizing the need for an all-hands-on-deck approach, the Crist Administration uses an interagency strategy for prevention that weaves the lessons learned, best practices and resources of the Office of Drug Control, the Departments of Children and Families, Juvenile Justice, Law Enforcement and Health, as well as working closely with the Attorney General and local, state and federal law enforcement agencies.

###