



The Florida Academy of **PAIN MEDICINE** Integration & Innovation



On Thursday, I testified before a U.S. House of Representatives subcommittee at a hearing on “Prescription Drug Diversion: Combating the Scourge.” Congresswoman Bono Mack invited me to testify due to Florida’s crucial role in combating prescription drug abuse. With more than seven Floridians dying a day, I have made ridding our state of this horrific epidemic my top priority.

I discussed Florida’s comprehensive legislation, law enforcement operations, and prevention strategies that are curbing prescription drug abuse and drug diversion in Florida. In 2010, 98 of the top 100 dispensing physicians of oxycodone in the nation resided in Florida. Today, only 13 of the top 100 dispensing physicians reside in Florida. Additionally, last year Florida had more than 900 pain management clinics registered within the state, but now there are less than 580. We are making great strides, but the fight is not over. This legislative session I am working with Senator Negron and Representative Stargel on a bill to create a Statewide Task Force on Prescription Drug Abuse and Newborns. The task force would be charged with examining the scope of the problem, the costs associated with caring for babies with neonatal withdrawal syndrome, the long-term effects of the syndrome, and strategies for preventing prescription drug abuse by expectant mothers. A thorough examination of this emerging problem now will help us develop sound prevention strategies for the future.

Thursday’s hearing was a wonderful opportunity to meet with national leaders to discuss this serious public safety threat facing our country. It takes a combined effort on local, state and federal levels to make a difference.

