

Sessions: Drug overdoses 'the top lethal issue' in the US

August 29 2017, by Ivan Moreno



Attorney General Jeff Sessions speaks at the annual conference of the National Alliance for Drug Endangered Children at the KI Convention Center on Tuesday, Aug. 29, 2017 in Green Bay, Wis. (Adam Wesley/The Post-Crescent via AP)

Attorney General Jeff Sessions on Tuesday called drug overdose deaths "the top lethal issue" in the U.S. and urged law enforcement and social

workers to "create and foster a culture that's hostile to drug use."

Sessions spoke to the annual conference of the National Alliance For Drug Endangered Children. He said preliminary data show nearly 60,000 overdose deaths in the U.S. in 2016, the highest ever.

"Our current drug epidemic is indeed the deadliest in American history. We've seen nothing like it," said Sessions.

He highlighted Department of Justice efforts to curb opioid abuse, including a pilot program announced Aug. 2 to send 12 federal prosecutors to cities ravaged by addiction to investigate health care fraud and opioid scams.

At one point he accused Hollywood, the media and government officials for sending "mixed messages about the harmfulness of drugs." He didn't name any government officials.

"This is not acceptable," Sessions said. "We must not capitulate, intellectually or morally, to drug use. We must create and foster a culture that's hostile to drug use."

In May, Sessions reversed an effort from the Obama-era Justice Department that called on federal prosecutors to rein in the use of long, mandatory minimum sentences for some drug criminals to focus resources elsewhere. Sessions is now directing prosecutors to pursue the toughest punishments against most suspects.

Attorney General Jeff Sessions is calling the epidemic of drug overdose deaths "the top lethal issue" in the U.S. and urged everyone "create and foster a culture that's hostile to drug use."

Sessions delivered the remarks Tuesday to the National Alliance For

Drug Endangered Children, which is hosting its annual conference in Green Bay, Wisconsin. Sessions told conference attendees that preliminary data showing nearly 60,000 overdose deaths in the U.S. in 2016 will be the highest in the country's history.

Sessions spoke for about 25 minutes and left without taking questions.

At one point, he accused Hollywood, the media and government officials for sending "mixed messages about the harmfulness of drugs." He didn't name any government officials.

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