



Commissioners Approve Opioid Settlement Funding for Local Recovery Program

Posted on December 5, 2025 by Carey Fauscett-Anderson

TRENTON, Ga. (Dec. 4, 2025) — The Dade County Board of Commissioners approved the allocation of opioid settlement funds totaling \$37,150 to support a local recovery program during its December regular meeting, authorizing targeted assistance for residents affected by substance use disorder.

The request was presented by Rex Mayo on behalf of A Hand Up Ministry, a faith-based nonprofit that operates a free, residential recovery program serving men and women transitioning from incarceration or crisis situations. The ministry's Phase I program provides structured housing, basic necessities and recovery support during an initial 90-day period, with the goal of stabilizing participants and preparing them for longer-term recovery.



Mayo explained that while the program is provided at no cost to participants, it carries measurable operational expenses. He stated that the average cost of operating the program is approximately \$3,700 per participant, which covers housing, clothing, food, transportation and coordination with medical, dental and behavioral health providers when needed.

The original request sought \$74,300 to support approximately 20 participants. Following discussion, commissioners elected to approve a reduced allocation of \$37,150, sufficient to support approximately 10 participants, allowing the county to preserve remaining settlement funds for additional opioid-related needs.

During the discussion, Commissioner Bill Pullen, a retired surgeon, emphasized the importance of outcomes and accountability in treatment-based funding decisions.

“What is the goal after the first 90 days, and how do we know if this is working?” Pullen asked, underscoring the need for follow-up and measurable success while recognizing confidentiality limitations.

Commissioners discussed the importance of preserving settlement funds for multiple opioid-response priorities, including ongoing purchases of naloxone (Narcan) for county facilities, law enforcement and emergency services, as well as potential future treatment or prevention initiatives.

Chairman Don Townsend reminded the board that the funding originates from a national opioid settlement resulting from litigation against pharmaceutical manufacturers and distributors. Those funds are legally restricted and must be used exclusively for opioid-related prevention, treatment, recovery and mitigation efforts.

Commissioners requested future program updates, when feasible, to help evaluate outcomes and stewardship of public funds while respecting participant confidentiality. Several board members expressed appreciation for the ministry’s long-standing presence and its work with Dade County residents seeking recovery.

The allocation was approved unanimously as part of the consent agenda.

The action reflects the county’s intent to deploy opioid settlement dollars deliberately, balancing immediate recovery needs with responsible oversight of limited, one-time funding resources.

