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**Joint Press Release**

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**Lake County State's Attorney Eric Rinehart Nominee, Chelsea Laliberte Barnes, Live4Lali Co-Founder, Appointed to Attorney General's Remediation Fund Advisory Board**



Today, the Lake County State's Attorney's Office, Lake County Opioid Initiative (LCOI), and Live4Lali announced that the Co-Founder of Live4Lali and LCOI, Chelsea Laliberte Barnes, was appointed by Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul to the Illinois Remediation Fund Advisory Board.

The Illinois Remediation Fund was created through an agreement between the State of Illinois and local government units. The state will disperse \$760 million over the next 18 years to abate the devastating impacts of the opioid overdose epidemic.

The Remediation Fund's Advisory Board was created to make recommendations that prioritize the equitable distribution of the money in the Fund. The board considers factors such as population, opioid usage rates, overdose deaths, and the number of opioids shipped into a region. It comprises policymakers, advocates, public health professionals, legal experts, and clinicians.

Chelsea Laliberte Barnes is a mental health advocacy leader and a social worker nominated by Lake County State's Attorney Eric Rinehart.

"I nominated Chelsea because her experience in this field is exactly what we need on this important board. She will fight for evidence-based programs that will make a real difference in the lives of Illinoisans," State's Attorney Rinehart said.

Barnes has dedicated over 13 years of her life to fighting the opioid overdose epidemic.

"I am humbled to accept Attorney General Raoul's appointment. After losing my brother to an overdose and spending over a decade on the ground providing support, education, harm reduction, and advocacy for the forgotten families of this epidemic, I am honored to lend my experience and knowledge. We can never bring back the lives lost, but thanks to research, we know exactly what is required to end this epidemic and ensure that anyone using substances or struggling with a substance use disorder can make any positive change. We do not have a moment to lose," said Barnes.

Barnes will help ensure an equitable allocation of resources to all parts of the state in support of programs that help remediate and abate the opioid crisis.

Lake County Board Chair Sandy Hart stated, "Chelsea has been a champion for those suffering from substance use disorders, mental illness, and the loss of a loved one due to the opioid epidemic. She will be an amazing addition to this board for the people of Lake County and all of Illinois."

"It's very exciting to hear that all our work is being recognized with this appointment. While Lake County Opioid Initiative has been at the forefront of the battle to end the opioid epidemic for the last ten years, Chelsea has been the tip of the spear of that fight for those same 10 years as an LCOI founder and Board member and now as Chair," Bill Gentes, LCOI Executive Director said.

Every day in America, more than 290 people lose their lives to an accidental drug overdose, more than car crashes, homicides, and suicides. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported 4,061 lives lost to overdose from January 2021 to January 2022, a serious 12.63% increase from the year prior.

Anyone who believes they or a loved one may be addicted to opioids can seek help by calling the Illinois Helpline for Opioids and Other Substances at [833-2FINDHELP](tel:833-2FINDHELP), which operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

**About Live4Lali:**

Buffalo Grove, Illinois resident Alex “Lali” Laliberte died of an accidental opioid overdose in 2008. Chelsea and her parents, Jody Daitchman and Gary Laliberte, established Live4Lali, a 501(c)(3), so that other families might not suffer the devastation of their loss. Live4Lali works to reduce stigma, prevent substance use disorder among individuals, families, and communities, and minimize the overall health, legal and social harms associated with substance use. Live4Lali has helped pass groundbreaking state and federal legislation and offers direct, on-the-ground education, support, and harm reduction services to those directly impacted by addiction or overdose. Visit Live4Lali at [Live4Lali.org](http://Live4Lali.org), on its social media platforms, or for more information, call 844.584.5254.

**About the Lake County Opioid Initiative:**

The Lake County Opioid Initiative (LCOI) has over 200 regional and Lake County organizations as well as 300 individuals on our membership roster dedicated to working on reducing and ending overdose and opioid use disorders LCOI has created and led the way nationally on numerous programs like getting naloxone in the hands of first responders, prescription drug collection boxes and the deflection program, “A Way Out”. Along the way they have won numerous national and state awards as well as being recognized as a subject matter expert by other coalitions around the country.

LCOI is a 501(c)(3) and has been active since 2012. To learn more, visit [opioidinitiative.org](http://opioidinitiative.org), or contact Bill Gentes at [wgentes@drugfreelakecounty.org](mailto:wgentes@drugfreelakecounty.org) or 224-545-3798.

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