



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Phil Boyle

Press Release: Senator Ranzenhofer Hosts Public Forum on Heroin and Opioid Addiction

PHIL BOYLE June 3, 2014

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Ranzenhofer to host public forum for Heroin and

Opioid Addiction Task Force in Batavia

Senator Michael H. Ranzenhofer will host a public forum for the Joint Senate Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Addiction this Friday, May 23 from 10 a.m. to noon at Batavia City Hall, One Batavia City Centre. Members of the public are invited to attend and participate in the discussion.

The forum is one of seventeen statewide to solicit input on the rise of heroin and opioids and to develop legislative recommendations for treating and preventing addiction and its consequences.

"Heroin and opioid addiction is a very serious issue facing communities all across the State. That is why I have invited the Task Force to discuss the impact heroin and opioid use has on our local community," said Ranzenhofer. "I look forward to this important discussion with community stakeholders."

The Task Force is chaired by Senator Phil Boyle (R-C-I, Suffolk County), Chairman of the Senate Committee on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse. "The numbers are staggering. Every day we hear of one heroin-related tragedy after another in our state," said Boyle. "I applaud Senator Ranzenhofer for his leadership in our statewide fight against heroin and opioid addiction."

Participating panelists are experts in the fields of education, law enforcement, mental health and substance abuse, civic groups and individuals directly affected by opioid abuse, including:

Gary Maha- Sheriff, Genesee County

Shawn Heubusch- Chief of Police, Batavia Police Department

Timothy Lynch- Assistant U.S. Attorney Western District, Chief of Narcotics and Violent Crime Division

Dr. Michael Merrill- Vice President of Medical Affairs, United Memorial Medical Center

Lisa Glow- Program Director, Horizon Health Services

Colleen Babcock- Parent & Family Support Coordinator, Horizon Health Services

John Bennett- Executive Director, GCASA

Dr. Bruce Baker- Medical Director, GCASA

Augusta Welsh- Director of Community Services, Genesee County Mental Health Services

Donna Sherman- Substance Abuse Treatment Program Manager, VA Western New York Healthcare System

Heroin's deadly effects are well established, and overdoses are on the rise across the State. In February, the New York Times reported that the Federal Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA) heroin seizures in New York State increased 67 percent over the prior four years. The Buffalo News reported that 29 people died of heroin overdoses in Erie County in 2013, "almost a third more than the year before."

The 2014-2015 State Budget included \$2.45 million for initiatives to provide prevention, treatment and addiction services to address the increased prevalence of heroin and opioid abuse.