



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

George Amedore

## Joint Senate Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Addiction Announces Forums

GEORGE A. AMEDORE, JR. April 13, 2015

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The New York State Senate today announced the schedule for the first round of forums being held by the bipartisan Joint Senate Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Addiction. The Task Force will meet in Yorktown, Rochester, Lewiston, Albany and additional communities to examine the issues created by increased heroin abuse that is causing hundreds of deaths in communities across the state.

The Task Force is co-chaired by Senator Terrence Murphy (R-C-I, Yorktown); Senator Robert Ort (R, North Tonawanda), Chairman of the Senate Committee on Mental Health; and Senator George A. Amedore, Jr. (R-C-I, Rotterdam), Chairman of the Senate Committee on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse. The forums will provide an opportunity for Senators to solicit input from stakeholders and experts and use the information collected to develop recommendations for legislative action.

Senator Murphy said, "This Task Force must tackle this dire situation head on, because kids are dying. We successfully included language in the budget to allow school nurses to administer the lifesaving drug NARCAN but we need to be doing more. We will work to build partnerships across the state as we determine the next steps needed to end this terrible epidemic."

Senator Ortt said, “Communities across New York State are no stranger to opiate and heroin overdoses. One life lost to this dangerous epidemic is one too many. These forums will help us devise a comprehensive plan that provides solutions for those struggling with substance use and their families. The discussions will allow the Task Force to collect and process important information from victims, family members, law enforcement, and medical professionals in order to better our community and most importantly, save lives.”

Senator Amedore said, “Every day, the heroin epidemic is destroying lives in communities throughout New York State, and we need to do everything possible to address this crisis head on. I look forward to joining my colleagues on the Task Force to hear crucial input from medical professionals, educators, and law enforcement officials, in addition to families who have felt the devastating effects first-hand. These forums will provide valuable insight into the most effective ways to increase awareness and prevention efforts, and how to make sure treatment options are readily available for those who need them.”

Recent opiate statistics show a pressing and urgent need to find a solution to this statewide epidemic. Deaths in New York from opiate overdoses are increasing with 34 suspected opiate deaths in Erie County so far this year -- 13 of which occurred in just one recent week. And in New York City, the most recent statistics available showed that for the second straight year heroin deaths surpassed homicides with 420 people dying from heroin overdoses compared to 335 homicides in 2013.

The first four forums are being held this spring and will be followed by additional forums in other communities this fall.

### **2015 Joint Senate Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Addiction Schedule**

#### **Westchester County:**

Thursday, April 30, 7 p.m.: Mildred E. Strang Middle School, 2701 Crompond Rd, Yorktown Heights, NY 10598

**Monroe County:**

Wednesday, May 6, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.: St. John Fisher College Wegmans School of Nursing Building, Room 100, 3690 East Ave., Rochester, NY 14618.

**Niagara County:**

Thursday, May 7, 4:30 p.m. to 6 p.m.: Niagara University Dunleavy Hall, Room 127, 5795 Lewiston Rd., Niagara University, NY 14109.

**Albany County:**

Tuesday, June 2, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.: SUNY Albany D'Ambra Auditorium, Life Sciences Research Building, 1400 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12222

Members of the bipartisan task force include Senator John Bonacic (R-C-I, Mount Hope), Senator Phil Boyle (R-C-I, Suffolk County), Senator David Carlucci (D, Rockland), Senator Thomas Croci (R, Sayville), Senator Hugh Farley (R-C, Schenectady), Senator John Flanagan (R-C-I, East Northport), Senator Rich Funke (R-C-I, Fairport), Senator Pat Gallivan (R-C-I, Elma), Senator Martin J. Golden (R-C-I, Brooklyn), Senator Joseph A. Griffo (R, Rome), Senator Kemp Hannon (R, Nassau), Senator Andrew Lanza (R-C-I, Staten Island), Senator William Larkin (R-C, Cornwall-on-Hudson), Senator Kenneth LaValle (R-C-I, Port Jefferson), Senator Carl L. Marcellino (R, Syosset), Senator Kathleen A. Marchione (R-C, Halfmoon), Senator Jack Martins (R-C-I, Mineola), Senator Michael Nozzolio (R-C, Fayette), Senator Tom O'Mara (R-C, Big Flats), Senator Michael Ranzenhofer (R-C-I, Amherst), Senator Patty Ritchie (R-C, Heuvelton), Senator Joseph Robach (R-C-I, Rochester), Senator Diane Savino (D, Staten Island/Brooklyn), Senator Susan Serino (R, Hyde Park), Senator James L. Seward (R-C-I, Oneonta), Senator David J. Valesky (D-Oneida), Senator Michael Venditto (R-C-I, Massapequa), and Senator Cathy Young (R-I-C, Olean).

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