



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patrick M. Gallivan

Gallivan Takes Part in Roundtable Addressing Prescription Drug Abuse Crisis in New York State

PATRICK M. GALLIVAN February 15, 2012

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Senate Passes Series of Bills To Curb Prescription Painkiller Abuse

Senator Patrick M. Gallivan (R,C,I- 59th District) was among a handful of Senators to take part in a Senate Roundtable on New York State's Prescription Drug Abuse Crisis, hosted in Albany today by Senators Kemp Hannon and Jeffrey Klein, Chairmen of the Senate Committee on Health and the Senate Committee Alcoholism and Drug Abuse, respectively.

The Roundtable included doctors, pharmacists, medical professionals, addiction specialists, law enforcement officials, drug abuse prevention organizations, and parents of victims whose deaths were attributed to prescription drug abuse, including, Avi and Julie Israel of North Buffalo.

Prior to the roundtable, Senators Gallivan and Hannon privately met with another Western New York family devastated by drug addiction, Mark and Suzanne Crotty of Colden, who lost their son, Zack, to a fatal overdose from a cocktail of prescription drugs in 2009.

“Prescription drug addiction – and the crimes committed by the afflicted – are decimating our communities,” said Senator Gallivan. “It’s a battle that must be waged on multiple fronts; we must combat the root cause of prescription drug abuse and addiction, while working to improve the State’s criminal code and public health regulations to punish those who disseminate these drugs illegally.”

After the roundtable, the Senate took quick action, passing a series of bills targeting prescription drug abuse:

S.5880A – Places greater controls on highly addictive opioids, Hydrocodone and Tramadol.

S.5260C – Increases criminal penalties for doctors and pharmacists who illegally divert prescriptions medications, protecting consumers and Medicaid dollars, while punishing offenders.

S.6066 – Specifically addresses “pill mills” by creating a new crime: criminal sale of a controlled substance by a practitioner or pharmacist.

S.3210B – Reclassifies the first-degree illegal sale of a controlled substance to a minor under the age of 14, making it a class A-II felony.

“The laws passed today make prescription drugs more difficult to obtain illegally, target those who distribute them illegitimately, and improve New York State’s antiquated narcotics laws, which are ill-equipped to combat the scope and nature of the prescription drug epidemic,” said Gallivan. “Prescription drug abuse is a matter of public health and a matter of public safety; I will continue to work within the legislature, and with Governor Cuomo, Attorney General Schneiderman, and state and local law enforcement to address this crisis through all available means.”

The Senate also passed a resolution today to designate April 28, 2012 as “Prescription Drug Take-Back Day” in New York State, coinciding with national “Prescription Drug Take-Back Day”.

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