



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

David J. Valesky

Senator Valesky Supports Landmark Legislation to Curb Prescription Drug Abuse

DAVID J. VALESKY June 12, 2012

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The New York State Senate passed legislation ([S7637](#)) yesterday that will significantly change the way prescription drugs are distributed and monitored in New York State, with the intent of mitigating the growing prescription drug abuse problem.

“Sadly, prescription medication abuse and addiction has become an epidemic which reaches across our entire society,” Senator Valesky said. “This legislation will save lives and help to educate people about the dangers of abusing prescription drugs.”

The legislation includes “real time” prescription tracking to provide additional information to doctors and pharmacists, with the intent of reducing the number of overdoses and deaths from prescription medication.

The abuse of prescription medicine has become the nation's fastest-growing drug problem according to the Office of National Drug Control Policy. According to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), nearly 15,000 people die every year of overdoses due to prescription painkillers. In 2010, 1 in 20 people in the United States over the age of 11 reported using prescription painkillers for nonmedical reasons in the past year.

The legislation:

- Creates an improved “real time” Prescription Monitoring Program (I-STOP) that practitioners and pharmacists can securely and easily access, allowing them to view patients' controlled substance histories;
- Requires e-prescribing, making New York a national leader by being one of the first states to move from paper prescriptions to a system mandating electronic prescribing;
- Updates controlled substance schedules to align New York’s Controlled Substances Act with Federal Law and changing the schedules for hydrocodone compounds and tramadol to reduce abuse;
- Enhances the Prescription Pain Medication Awareness Program to educate the public and health care practitioners about the risks associated with prescribing and taking controlled substance pain medications; and
- Establishes a Safe Disposal Program to increase the options available to safely dispose of unused controlled substances and prevent people who abuse prescription painkillers from obtaining them from friends or relatives.