



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jack M. Martins

Intern for Senator Martins Raises Prescription Drug Abuse Awareness

Jack M. Martins

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Mineola High School Senior Eric Timlin, an intern at the District Office of State Senator Jack M. Martins, wanted his senior project to be something that would benefit his classmates and the community as a whole. Timlin decided to organize an assembly at Mineola High School about a problem that has come to light in recent years – the prescription drug abuse epidemic.

Recently, the New York State Senate added a powerful tool to combat the epidemic through a new law, entitled I-STOP, that was co-sponsored by Senator Martins. The legislation, which was signed into law by Governor Cuomo, creates an online database accessible to doctors and pharmacists who will be able to identify who is getting excessive prescriptions of narcotics.

Timlin's senior project involved organizing an assembly for his classmates at Mineola High School. He enlisted Senator Martins to speak about the I-STOP legislation as well as substance abuse counselor Jason Andrews from the Nassau Alternative Advocacy Program and Nassau County Police Department Detective Pam Stark. The panel discussed the prescription painkiller addiction, noting how easily a person can get addicted to commonly prescribed painkillers.

As Senator Martins pointed out, over the past year, 21 million narcotic prescriptions were filled in New York State, which has a population of approximately 19 million people. I-STOP will enable physicians to consult a database that will have a patient's

prescription history before prescribing controlled substances such as Morphine, Oxycodone, Codeine and Hydrocodone. This way, physicians will be better able to detect doctor shoppers (going to multiple doctors in order to get numerous prescriptions to feed addiction) and better serve patients at risk of addiction.

Stark, an addiction counselor located in Garden City Park, spoke about how prescription drug addiction can destroy lives and Detective Stark spoke about how some young people have experimented with prescription drugs, putting their lives in danger.

The senior project is a requirement for graduation at Mineola High School and Timlin wanted his to benefit his school and community by raising awareness about a very serious issue. His effort in organizing the assembly was applauded by Mineola High School Principal Ed Escobar. "Eric took it upon himself to reach out to Senator Martins and organize an assembly about I-STOP and prescription drug abuse. He did a wonderful job in putting together the presentation that concerned a very important subject for both students and adults alike," Principal Escobar said.

The I-STOP legislation is an important step in fighting prescription drug abuse, but there are also other important measures such as educating the youth of our communities as well as parents. Senator Martins thanked Timlin for his work in spreading the word about the dangers of prescription drug abuse. "Eric did a great job spreading the word about I-STOP and the dangers of prescription drug abuse. In order to fight this epidemic, we need to energize our youth. Eric's project was informative and important. I thank him for his efforts," Senator Martins said.