



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Timothy M. Kennedy

# **Senator Kennedy Announces New Addiction Treatment Services for Western New York**

Timothy M. Kennedy

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***NYS Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services to add 25 new residential treatment beds for young adults in WNY.***

***At August forum, Kennedy called attention to the dramatic lack of treatment beds in WNY, has been pushing for more resource for region.***

***Kennedy: Rx drug addiction is a local public health crisis. The addition of 25 new beds is an important step toward ensuring WNY families have access to the treatment services they need.***

BUFFALO, N.Y. – Senator Tim Kennedy, D-Buffalo, announced that the NYS Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) will be taking steps to address the dramatic shortfall of addiction treatment services in Western New York. OASAS plans to add 25 new residential treatment beds in Western New York to target the rising problem of prescription drug dependency among individuals ages 18 to 25. Kennedy commended OASAS for this long-awaited move to boost resources for local young people who have fallen addicted.

At [a roundtable forum held in August](#), Kennedy called attention to the dramatic shortage of treatment beds in Western New York. Over the last several months, the Buffalo senator has been fighting for more resources for local addiction treatment services. Kennedy recently spoke to OASAS Commissioner Arlene González-Sánchez on a conference call to outline the need to address the substantial shortage of treatment services throughout our region. Only 16 percent of local needs for intensive residential rehabilitation services are met, leaving 84 percent unmet need, according to the WNY Chemical Dependency Consortium.

“The surge in prescription drug addiction has given rise to unacceptable levels of unmet need for local treatment services in Western New York,” said **Senator Kennedy**. “Families seek out help, but they can’t find access to the support they need. When addiction is left untreated, it too often leads to tragedies like overdoses, suicides and drug-related crime. This is a local public health crisis that needs to be addressed. The addition of 25 new beds is a huge step toward filling our regional treatment shortages. It means more Western New York families will have access to the treatment services they need to help loved ones recover from addiction. I commend Governor Cuomo and OASAS Commissioner González-Sánchez for opening up these new resources for Western New Yorkers.”

Senator Kennedy has worked with Avi Israel, whose son Michael lost his life after battling addiction, to push for change to stop prescription drug abuse and boost resources for local addiction treatment.

“This is a step in the right direction, and it’s targeted toward the right group of people,” said **Avi Israel**. “These 25 new residential treatment beds are intended to serve young adults ages 18 to 25 – an age group that too often falls victim to addiction. Too many young people are losing their lives and too many parents are losing their kids because of addiction. There’s still a shortage of treatment beds in Western New York, but I am thrilled that OASAS will be opening up 25 new beds

locally. I thank Commissioner Gonzalez-Sanchez for making this important move, and I'm grateful for Senator Kennedy who's continuing the fight against prescription drug addiction."

The announcement of 25 more beds for Western New York is welcome news for local treatment providers.

**Anne Constantino**, president and CEO of Horizon Health Services, said, "Horizon Health Services and Horizon Village are very excited that the leadership in our WNY community has recognized the dire need for increased access to intensive residential beds in WNY, specially for young adults impacted by opiate dependence. Our community has been deluged by the opiate drug epidemic and resources such as this are greatly needed. We thank the WNY leadership for their tireless efforts."

OASAS is releasing a [request for proposal](#) to increase the number of residential beds for young adults battling prescription drug addiction. The agency plans to award a 25-bed project in Western New York. In order to ensure the new services are opened up quickly, providers must be able to complete the project in a timely manner and prove their ability to provide the appropriate services. OASAS anticipates that the awards will be made available by mid-April. For more information, visit this website: <http://www.oasas.ny.gov/procurements/index.cfm>.

OASAS outlined the rise in prescription drug abuse in Western New York. The agency states, "Between 2008 and 2010, the number of hydrocodone prescriptions filled in Erie County was more than triple the number of prescriptions of any other controlled prescription drug. Between 2007 and 2011, non-crisis admissions to drug treatment programs for prescription opioids in Erie County rose from 842 to 1,462, a 74 percent increase. Individuals under 35 years of age accounted for 72 percent of all prescription opioid admissions to treatment in Erie County between 2007 and 2011."

If you are battling addiction, help is available. You can contact the state's HOPEline at 1-877-8-HOPENY. The line is staffed by trained clinicians who are prepared to answer questions and help direct individuals to support resources.

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*Senator Timothy M. Kennedy represents the New York State Senate's 63rd District, which is comprised of the towns of Cheektowaga, the city of Lackawanna and nearly all of the city of Buffalo. More information is available at <http://kennedy.nysenate.gov>.*