



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrew J. Lanza

Senator Andrew Lanza, Assemblyman Michael Cusick and Richmond County D.a. Dan Donovan Call on NYS Dept. of Health to Close Doctor-Shopping Loopholes

ANDREW J LANZA January 28, 2014



Senator Andrew Lanza, Assemblyman Michael Cusick and Richmond County D.A. Dan Donovan today called on the NYS Dept. of Health to crack down on interstate 'doctor shopping' and overprescribing in New York State. In a joint letter to State Health Commissioner Dr. Nirav R. Shah, the elected officials argued that entering into collective information-sharing agreements with surrounding states and monitoring their controlled substance prescription activity would help to identify those who have been traveling across state lines in order to illicitly obtain multiple prescriptions for narcotic pain-killers.

“Prescription drug abusers who seek multiple prescriptions from multiple doctors are now shopping in neighboring states that do not track who is filling prescriptions for products prone to abuse and recreational use,” said Senator Andrew Lanza. “Monitoring programs, including New York’s landmark I-STOP law, will be most effective when neighboring states have programs that can share information with each other. These programs, if used effectively, can help detect diversion and prevent abuse of pharmaceutical controlled substances within states and across state lines.”

“Noticing the escalating prescription drug abuse problem on Staten Island, Senator Lanza and I crafted the I-Stop law in 2012. We were seeing a pattern of increased doctor shopping, pharmacy robberies, stolen prescription pads, and a boost in emergency room visits by abusers and addicts. In negotiating the law we insisted that a future means to begin the next step of sharing information with other states be included in that law,” continued Cusick.

“That is why District Attorney Dan Donovan, Senator Lanza and I are asking our New York State Health Commissioner, Dr. Nirav R. Shah, to enter into agreements with our surrounding states to share information with respect to reporting and prescribing of controlled substances. We have begun to see the benefits of the I-STOP law in curbing abuse of controlled substances. Now it is time to share and receive information with other states to prohibit New York residents from crossing our porous borders to elude the New York State database set up by the I-STOP law,” said Assemblyman Cusick.

Richmond County District Attorney Dan Donovan said, "The I-STOP legislation sponsored by Senator Lanza and Assemblyman Cusick is proving a vital tool in preventing doctor and pharmacy shopping by people who abuse prescription pills. However, I-STOP is only used in New York and criminals are aware of its limitations. The bad guys are circumventing the authorities by going to our neighboring states - New Jersey, Connecticut, Vermont, Massachusetts and Pennsylvania - to illegally obtain prescriptions. We are imploring the New York State Department of Health to ask those states to partner with the good guys and help us create a prescription sharing system that would truly 'stop' the flow of illegal prescription drugs into Staten Island."

Senator Lanza, Assemblyman Cusick and D.A. Donovan led the effort to pass the landmark I-STOP law, the Internet System For Tracking Over-Prescribing Act, to fight prescription drug abuse in New York State. The law, signed by Governor Andrew Cuomo in 2012, made

New York a leader in fighting the prescription drug abuse epidemic by overhauling the way prescription drugs are distributed and tracked in New York State. The legislation included the following provisions:

- Created a New and Updated Prescription Monitoring Program (I-STOP)
- Mandated Electronic Prescribing of Controlled Substances
- Updated the Controlled Substance Schedules to Stop Abuse of Certain Drugs, While Protecting Patient Access
- Improved Education and Awareness of Prescribers to Stem the Tide of Prescription Drug Abuse
- Created a Safe Disposal Program to Safely Dispose of Prescription Drugs

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