



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jack M. Martins

Senator Martins Announces Passage of Bill to Prevent Overdose Deaths

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Measure Gives More People Access to Antidote That Prevents Accidental Overdose Deaths from Heroin and Other Opioids

Senator Jack M. Martins (R-Mineola) announced that the New York State Senate recently passed legislation to help save lives by increasing access to a highly effective antidote for accidental drug overdose known as Naloxone or Narcan. The bill (S6477B), which Senator Martins sponsored with Senator Kemp Hannon (R-Nassau County), allows authorized health care professionals to issue non-patient specific orders for Naloxone to certified training programs and pharmacies, which could then distribute the Naloxone kits and instruct how to properly administer it. If timely administered, Naloxone can prevent an overdose death.

“One person lost to an overdose is one too many. This measure will save lives as we fight this epidemic that is plaguing our communities,” Senator Martins said. “This

will help some overdose victims get a second chance at life, recover and lead a productive life. Two of our major tools in the fight against substance abuse are education and treatment.”

Roundtables held by the Senate Health Committee in 2011 and 2012 raised the topic of access to Naloxone. Expanding upon the success of existing programs, more lives could be saved if Naloxone was available to addicts, their families and other people likely to be in a position to assist a person at risk of an opioid-related overdose. Currently, parents and family members of addicts are being turned away from Naloxone training programs or are attending the programs and not receiving Naloxone due to the shortage of prescribers participating in such programs.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention has reported that every 19 minutes, one person dies from an accidental overdose from prescription drug abuse. In an effort to curb this prescription drug crisis, the Legislature enacted the seminal I-STOP legislation in 2012. Due to the success of I-STOP, street access to controlled substances has declined. One unfortunate side effect of this is that drug abusers are turning to other drugs, such as heroin, as the cheaper alternative to prescription drugs.

In addition to this bill passed, the Senate has taken several steps to focus on the increased use of heroin and other opioids in New York. The Joint Senate Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Addiction was created earlier this month to examine the rise in the use of heroin and other opioids in New York State and will develop legislative recommendations. Senator Martins was named a member of the Task Force. Forums will be held in regions throughout the state.

In the Senate’s budget resolution, \$5 million was proposed for increased heroin prevention, treatment, and recovery support services. The resolution also included a measure to increase the penalties for drug dealers by making it a class B felony for anyone to possess 50 or more individual packets of heroin and/or an amount of heroin with an aggregate value of at least \$300.

In 2011, the state enacted good Samaritan protections for witnesses and victims of overdoses. By removing the threat of prosecution, this measure encourages witnesses of an overdose to call 911 before it becomes deadly.