



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Phil Boyle

## **Press Release - Senators Lanza & Savino Hold Staten Island Forum on Heroin and Opioid Addiction**

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### **SENATORS ANDREW LANZA & DIANE SAVINO HOLD STATEN ISLAND FORUM ON HEROIN AND OPIOID ADDICTION**

Senators Andrew Lanza and Diane Savino today held the Staten Island regional forum of the Joint Senate Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Addiction at the Joan and Alan Bernikow Jewish Community Center of Staten Island.

The forum was one of 12 held throughout New York by the bipartisan task force which was created to solicit input on the increased use of heroin and opioids across

the state and to develop legislative recommendations for treating and preventing addiction and its consequences.

The forum included task force Chairman Senator Phil Boyle (R-C-I, Suffolk County), members of the task force, experts in the fields of law enforcement, mental health and substance abuse, municipal officials, and individuals directly affected by opioid abuse.

"Heroin and opioids are crippling, highly-addictive drugs that are leading to overdoses and deaths in all corners of the state," said Senator Andrew Lanza, member of the Joint Senate Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Addiction. "Today we brought together stakeholders from across Staten Island to determine how we can tackle this growing crisis. While there's no magic bullet and there will always be people struggling with addiction, I believe we can turn the tide on this epidemic by changing attitudes, implementing policies and supporting services for prevention and treatment."

Senator Savino stated, "Ground zero for this epidemic is Staten Island. I believe with Senators Boyle, Lanza and my own laser like focus on opioids and heroin we can be the needed prescription for change."

"I would like to thank Senator Lanza and Senator Savino for organizing an excellent forum on the Staten Island Heroin Epidemic," said Senator Phil Boyle. "We covered a wide variety of topics and gathered needed input from the panel and audience as we seek to craft legislative solutions for combating our statewide addiction epidemic."

The task force examined the issues and solicited input from experts and other stakeholders about addiction prevention and treatment options, the rise in heroin and opioid use, and the potential for drug-related crimes and other negative community impacts. Panelists included:

- **Senator Phil Boyle**, Chairman, Senate Joint Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Addiction
- **Senator Andrew J. Lanza**, Member, Senate Joint Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Addiction
- **Senator Diane Savino**, Member, Senate Joint Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Addiction
- **Assemblyman Michael Cusick**

- **Karen Varriale**, Deputy Chief of the Supreme Court Bureau, Richmond County District Attorney's Office
- **James J. Hunt**, Acting Special Agent in Charge, NY Division DEA
- **Anthony C. Ferreri**, President and Chief Executive Officer, Staten Island University Hospital
- **Dr. Russell Joffe**, Chairman of Behavioral Science, Staten Island University Hospital
- **Dr. Daniel J. Messina**, President & CEO Richmond University Medical Center
- **Luke Nasta**, Executive Director, Camelot Counseling
- **Jacqueline Fiore**, Executive Director, YMCA Counseling Services
- **Adrienne Abbate**, Director, Tackling Youth Substance Abuse Initiative, SI Partnership for Community Wellness
- **Gary Butchen**, Executive Director, Bridge Back to Life Center, Inc.
- **Dr. Hillary Kunins**, Acting Executive Deputy Commissioner, New York City Department of Health
- **Assistant Chief Edward Delatorre**, Commanding Officer, Patrol Borough Staten Island, NYPD
- **Captain Dominick Dorazio**, Commanding Officer, Narcotics, Borough Staten Island, NYPD
- **Boris Natzen**, Owner, Nate's Pharmacy
- **Brian Hunt**, Father of deceased Adam Hunt
- **Candace & Barry Crupi**, Parents of deceased Johnathan Crupi
- **James Fiore Jr.**, Outpatient, Treatment Addiction Services, Community Health Action of Staten Island

District Attorney Daniel M. Donovan, Jr. said, "Prescription pill abuse and illegal drug use are two of the major law enforcement issues facing our borough, particularly among our young people. I remain steadfast in my commitment to prosecute drug dealers. That said, my office will also continue to seek treatment sentences for drug users suffering from heroin and/or opioid addiction in cases where such dispositions are appropriate. I want to thank Senator Andrew Lanza and Senator Diane Savino for assembling this panel of experts to share their concerns and ideas on how to combat and treat the drug epidemic that is enveloping Staten Island."

Luke Nasta, Executive Director of Camelot on Staten Island said, "Regrettably, there has still not been a full commitment of resources to engage this most deadly

epidemic. On Staten Island, where Camelot was founded over 40 years ago, we are in a state of perpetual mourning. It is estimated that only 1 in 10 heroin overdoses result in a fatality. Tens of thousands of family members are suffering with addicted loved ones. This epidemic will prove more devastating to families and our overall society than the long term damaging effects of the drug culture of the 1960's."

Simply put, law enforcement cannot battle the problem alone, but can face this threat with combined resources from treatment, education, community, governmental and law enforcement organizations."

Heroin's deadly affects are well established, and overdoses are on the rise across the state. In New York City, the Times reported that "after several years of decline," heroin-related overdose deaths increased 84 percent from 2010 to 2012 and death rates on Staten Island are the highest of any borough in the city. From 2005 to 2011, according to city health statistics, while fatalities from drugs overdoses decreased citywide, the death rate from opioid overdose on Staten Island nearly quadrupled.

Due to the Senate Majority's efforts, the recently enacted 2014-15 state budget included an additional \$2.45 million for initiatives to provide prevention, treatment and addiction services to address the growing problems of heroin and opioid abuse. In addition to the creation of the task force, the Senate passed legislation ([S6477B](#)) in March to help save lives by allowing authorized health care professionals to increase public access to Narcan/Naloxone which, if timely administered, can prevent an overdose death.

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