



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Statement From Senator Ritchie on Passage of Legislation to Combat Heroin Epidemic

PATTY RITCHIE June 9, 2014

| ISSUE: **DRUGS**

What was once thought to only be a problem in inner cities, heroin is a drug that has pushed out across our state—being used everywhere from rural Northern New York to our Central New York suburbs and beyond.

Today, the Senate has taken a major step in fighting back against this deadly drug; passing a package of legislation to combat the heroin epidemic, including my bill (S.7662), which will help recovering abusers gain insurance coverage for treatment. The passage of these bills—which target the important areas of treatment, prevention and law enforcement—will go a long way to stop the spread of heroin and ensure those looking for help receive it.

The legislation passed today was made possible by the past users, friends, family members, law enforcement officials and drug experts who shared their ideas with members of the New York State Senate Joint Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Addiction at more than a dozen forums taking place across the state, including one which I hosted in Watertown. Through their stories of struggle and heartbreak, we were able to learn firsthand what needs to be done to tackle this major problem.

In the days to come, I'll continue to work with my colleagues, and listen to those at the ground level about what we can do—together—to stop the surge of heroin abuse in communities across New York State.