



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

George Amedore

Senator Amedore Appointed as Co-Chairman of Joint Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Addiction

GEORGE A. AMEDORE, JR. February 5, 2015

| ISSUE: **CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES, ALCOHOL, DRUGS, PRESCRIBED DRUGS OR PRESCRIPTIONS**



Senator George Amedore was appointed as Co-Chairman of the New York State Senate's bipartisan Joint Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Addiction. Senator Amedore will Co-Chair the Task Force along with Senators Terrence Murphy (Yorktown) and Robert Ortt (North Tonawanda).

The Task Force will continue to examine the issues facing communities in the wake of increased heroin abuse. The Task Force will hold forums, meet with experts, and evaluate what state measures may be needed to further reduce drug abuse in New York.

Senator Amedore, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse, said, "Heroin use

continues to grow in communities throughout New York State, and so many lives and families are being destroyed by this dangerous epidemic. I am proud to Co-Chair this Task Force, and continue its important work. I look forward to working with my colleagues and members of the community on ways to increase awareness and prevention efforts, and make sure treatment and recovery options are available to those who need them.”

According to the State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services, 1.8 million New Yorkers currently require assistance with chemical dependency – many due to opioid abuse, and nearly half of drug treatment admissions in the state result from an addiction to heroin or prescription opioids.

In 2014, the Senate created the bipartisan Joint Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Addiction, led by former Chairman of the Senate Committee on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Phil Boyle (R-C-I, Suffolk County) and Vice-Chairs Senator Mike Nozzolio (R-C, Fayette), and Senator David Carlucci (D, Rockland). The Task Force held 18 forums throughout New York including in Cayuga, Chautauqua, Chemung, Clinton, Genesee, Jefferson, Monroe, Nassau, New York, Oneida, Orange, Otsego, Putnam, Rensselaer, Richmond, Rockland, Suffolk, and Sullivan counties. Task Force members traveled over 8,000 miles, spoke with more than 200 panelists, and listened to over 50 hours of testimony. Forum participants examined the issues surrounding the increase in drug abuse, addiction and drug related crimes, solicited input from experts and other stakeholders, and developed recommendations.

The Task Force issued a comprehensive [report](#) to prevent drug abuse and overdoses; increase the availability and efficacy of addiction treatment; and enhance the tools provided to law enforcement to keep heroin off the streets. The report included legislative recommendations that lead to the Senate’s passage of 23 bills to address issues surrounding the increase in heroin and opioid abuse, addiction, and related crimes in New York.

A final package of new laws was enacted to include: increasing public awareness; establishing school drug prevention programs; increasing the effectiveness of overdoses prevention; creating a new model of detoxification and transitional services; establishing a relapse prevention demonstration program; enabling parents to seek services for children suffering from substance abuse; and promoting the affordability of substance abuse services.

The new laws also provided additional resources to law enforcement, including: assisting Health Department Bureau of Narcotic Enforcement Investigators; adding fraud and deceit of prescription medication to penal law; creating the criminal offense of “criminal sale of a controlled substance by a practitioner or pharmacist”; and making the “criminal sale of a controlled substance by a practitioner or pharmacist” offense eligible for prosecution under the enterprise corruption statute.

This year, the Task Force will conduct its first forum on February 24 in Pawling, Dutchess County, and additional forums are being scheduled for communities across the state in coming months. During the forums, Senators will meet again with local elected officials as

well as experts from the fields of law enforcement, addiction treatment, and education.

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