



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Terrence Murphy

Sobering news, N.Y. now America's heroin capital

TERRENCE P. MURPHY March 16, 2015

| ISSUE: **CRIME, CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES, DRUGS, PRESCRIBED DRUGS OR PRESCRIPTIONS**
| COMMITTEE: **HEROIN TASK FORCE**



ALBANY, NY - The Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor for the City of New York gave testimony this week that New York has become the nation's number one heroin trafficking hub. The co-chairs of the Joint Senate Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Addiction, State Senators Terrence Murphy, George Amedore and Robert Ortt, were alarmed by the news from prosecutor Bridgett Brennan.

"New Yorkers often like to think we are at the center of the universe, but no one wants to be at the center of this deadly universe," Senator Murphy said. "Law enforcement data shows that thirty-five percent of the heroin seized in the United States was done so right here in the Empire State. We must act with legislation and funding to step up our prevention, enforcement, treatment and recovery efforts before this crisis grows any further."

"As the heroin epidemic continues to rip through communities and destroy lives, reports show more heroin is being trafficked through New York than any other state," Senator Amedore said. "Eradicating this epidemic must be a priority, and we need to do everything possible to increase prevention efforts, make sure treatment is available, and strongly punish those who are profiting from dealing this deadly drug."

"The fact that New York State is accounting for a fifth of the nation's heroin seizures should be a wakeup call for our communities," Senator Ortt said. "The strength and widespread accessibility of this drug is tragically cutting lives short and tearing apart families. That's why awareness for the public, treatment for victims, and steep punishments for dealers is so critical."

Heroin packets can be purchased as for as little as six to ten dollars, Brennan said. A recent study published in the Annual Review of Public Health by Brandeis University researchers notes that a primary driver of opioid addiction is the over prescription of painkillers by doctors and cites the need for a new approach that integrates primary, secondary and tertiary prevention strategies.

The Senate passed its one-house budget resolution this past week, which proposed reprogramming \$8.2 million in the executive budget to help face the heroin crisis in Senate Bill S4203. New money was included for the purposes of adopting the heroin task forces' recommendations, as well as language that would allow school nurses to administer the potentially life-saving opioid antagonist naxalone, or NARCAN.