



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Terrence Murphy

Heroin Task Force announces first round of forums

TERRENCE P. MURPHY April 13, 2015

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| COMMITTEE: **HEROIN TASK FORCE**



ALBANY, NY - The New York State Senate today announced the schedule for the first round of forums being held by the bipartisan Joint Senate Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Addiction. The Task Force will meet in Yorktown, Rochester, Lewiston, Albany and additional communities to examine the issues created by increased heroin abuse that is causing hundreds of deaths in communities across the state.

The Task Force is co-chaired by Senator Terrence Murphy, Senator Robert Ortt, chairman of the Senate Committee on Mental Health; and Senator George A. Amedore, Jr., chairman of the Senate Committee on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse.

The forums will provide an opportunity for Senators to solicit input from stakeholders and experts and use the information collected to develop recommendations for legislative action.

"This Task Force must tackle this dire situation head on, because kids are dying," Senator Murphy said. "We successfully included language in the budget to allow school nurses to administer the lifesaving drug NARCAN but we need to be doing more. We will work to build partnerships across the state as we determine the next steps needed to end this terrible epidemic."

"Communities across New York State are no stranger to opiate and heroin overdoses. One life lost to this dangerous epidemic is one too many," Senator Ortt said. "These forums will help us devise a comprehensive plan that provides solutions for those struggling with substance use and their families. The discussions will allow the Task Force to collect and process important information from victims, family members, law enforcement, and medical professionals in order to better our community and most importantly, save lives."

"Every day, the heroin epidemic is destroying lives in communities throughout New York State, and we need to do everything possible to address this crisis head on," Senator Amedore said. "I look forward to joining my colleagues on the Task Force to hear crucial input from medical professionals, educators, and law enforcement officials, in addition to families who have felt the devastating effects first-hand. These forums will provide valuable insight into the most effective ways to increase awareness and prevention efforts, and how to make sure

treatment options are readily available for those who need them."

Lawmakers say that recent opiate statistics show a pressing and urgent need to find a solution to this statewide epidemic. Deaths in New York from opiate overdoses are increasing, with 34 suspected opiate deaths in Erie County so far this year ,13 of which occurred in just one recent week.

In New York City, the most recent statistics available showed that for the second straight year heroin deaths surpassed homicides with 420 people dying from heroin overdoses compared to 335 homicides in 2013.

The first four forums are being held this spring and will be followed by additional forums in other communities this fall.

2015 Joint Senate Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Addiction Schedule

Westchester County:

Thursday, April 30, 7 p.m.: Mildred E. Strang Middle School, 2701 Crompond Rd, Yorktown Heights, NY 10598

Monroe County:

Wednesday, May 6, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.: St. John Fisher College Wegmans School of Nursing Building, Room 100, 3690 East Ave., Rochester, NY 14618

Niagara County:

Thursday, May 7, 4:30 p.m. to 6 p.m.: Niagara University Dunleavy Hall, Room 127, 5795 Lewiston Rd., Niagara University, NY 14109.

Albany County:

Tuesday, June 2, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.: SUNY Albany D'Ambra Auditorium, Life Sciences Research Building, 1400 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12222

Members of the bipartisan task force include State Senators John Bonacic, Phil Boyle, David Carlucci, Thomas Croci, Hugh Farley, John Flanagan, Rich Funke, Pat Gallivan, Martin J. Golden, Joseph A. Griffo, Kemp Hannon, Andrew Lanza, William Larkin, Kenneth LaValle, Carl L. Marcellino, Kathleen A. Marchione, Jack Martins, Michael Nozzolio, Tom O'Mara, Michael Ranzenhofer, Patty Ritchie, Joseph Robach, Diane Savino, Susan Serino, James L. Seward, David J. Valesky, Michael Venditto and Cathy Young.