



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Terrence Murphy

Heroin Task Force Announces Actions to be Taken on Bills to Fight New York's Heroin Crisis

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ALBANY, NY - As co-chairman of the New York State Senate Joint Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Addiction, Senator Terrence Murphy announced yesterday that the Senate will soon be acting on its first flight of bills to help decrease heroin deaths and put more drug dealers behind bars for peddling dangerous opioids. In conjunction with Senator George A. Amedore, Jr. (R-C-I, Rotterdam) and Senator Robert Ortt (R-C-I, North Tonawanda), Senator Murphy said that the Senate is expected to take up the bills next week, before the end of the legislative session.

Senator Murphy said, "The first round of hearings provided valuable insight as to the obstacles we as a state must overcome to win the war on heroin and opioid addiction. This legislative package will advance important legislation from last year's Task Force as well as address new issues which have been identified as a result of the most recent hearings. Ultimately, we must continue our fight every day to curb the scourge of this epidemic by holding drug dealers accountable and by providing realistic options for prevention and those in recovery."

Over the past several weeks, the Task Force has held forums in Yorktown, Rochester, Lewiston, and Albany to examine the issues created by increased heroin abuse that is causing hundreds of deaths in communities across the state. Additional forums will be planned for more New York communities in the fall. The Task Force will then issue a report with recommendations for further legislative action to address concerns raised by law enforcement, health and mental health experts, victims' advocates, and other stakeholders who participated in the forums.

Senator Amedore said, "These bills will build on the laws enacted last year and this year's state budget, which increased funding for heroin treatment and prevention. There is no one solution that is going to end this crisis. We must continue to work to increase prevention, provide treatment, support continued recovery, and crack down on the dealers who bring this dangerous drug into our streets. The legislation is a good step in our continued efforts to eradicate this epidemic once and for all."

Senator Ortt said, "We've gathered input from experts and community members and have now taken the next step to fight this war against drugs. This sensible legislation will help prevent drug abuse, addiction and related crime, and provide families with better access to treatment programs. While these new laws are the Task Force's next step, they are certainly not the last. Our fight will not end when session does this month. We are committed to remaining vigilant in order to put an end to this widespread epidemic."

The preliminary package of eight bills to be acted on next week builds on the Senate legislation successfully enacted last year as a result of the Task Force's efforts. In addition, the 2015-16 state budget provided significant funding for programs targeting the heroin crisis, including: \$7.8 million in funding for statewide prevention, treatment and recovery services, \$450,000 to purchase narcan kits given out for free to individuals who participate in a narcan training class, and \$140,000 to finance the cost of narcan kits for staff and nurses authorized to administer narcan in the event of a heroin or opioid overdose at school.

Next week's legislative package will include two bills introduced by Senator Murphy:

Expanding the crime of operating as a major trafficker (S4177), sponsored by Senator Murphy: Helps strengthen the laws relating to major drug traffickers to more accurately reflect the nature of their criminal enterprises and increase successful prosecutions. The bill changes the number of persons needing to be involved and charged as part of a drug organization from four to three. Also, to reflect the low street prices of heroin, the bill lowers the minimum required proceeds from the sale of controlled substances during a 12 month period from \$75,000 to \$25,000.

Expanding treatment options for individuals in judicial diversion programs for opioid abuse or dependence (S4239B), sponsored by Senator Murphy: Provides that under no circumstances shall a defendant who requires treatment for opioid abuse or

dependence be deemed to have violated the release conditions on the basis of his or her participation in medically prescribed drug treatments while under the care of a qualified and licensed physician acting within the scope of his or her lawful practice.

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