Tamper resistant drugs to be made more available in New York State

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ALBANY, NY - As the legislative session comes to a close, the State Senate approved a historic piece of legislation this week to ensure insurance companies cover the use of abuse-deterrent drugs in order to prevent opioid abuse, lawmakers say.

Senator Terrence Murphy, co-chairman of the New York State Senate's Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Abuse, said "When it comes to winning the war on heroin and opioid abuse it is

our responsibility to provide every tool possible to the people of New York. I applaud my colleagues in the Senate for having the foresight needed to embrace the new technologies that are being developed which will significantly mitigate the growing opioid addiction."

"While opioids play an important and legitimate role in our health care system, they are powerful pain killers that can lead to addiction," explained Senator Kemp Hannon, Chair of the Senate Health Committee. "They can also fall into the wrong hands and be misused. This legislation will make sure abuse-deterrent opioids are available to patients and help ensure these medications are not misused by crushing and other means to enhance their effect."

According to the federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA), abuse-deterrent products can be used in a number of different ways, such as in the form of physical and chemical barriers which can limit opioid release if attempts are made to physically or chemically alter an opioid.

Another example of an abuse-deterrent are opioid antagonists, which can reduce or delay the opioid release which in turn would defeat the euphoria associated with abuse. Aversion is another form of abuse-deterrent in which an unpleasant effect is caused if the dosage is manipulated or used at a higher dose than directed.

"Often, opioid addiction is the result of the misuse, or overuse, of prescription pain medications," said Senator George Amedore, co-Chair of the Senate Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Abuse. "We need to address the heroin and opioid epidemic from every possible angle. This legislation helps make sure abuse-deterrent opioids are available and affordable for patients, and will ultimately cut down on the abuse of prescription pain medications which can lead to addiction."

"The dramatic rise in professional-prescribed pain medicine - along with the neurological complexities of addiction - has created a rampant crisis of opioid abuse in our communities," said Senator Rob Ortt, co-Chair of the Senate Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Abuse (R,C,I - North Tonawanda). "This legislation will build upon the breakthrough of abuse deterrent formulation (ADF) research by expanding this technology into prescriptions that are prone to tampering and abuse. While ADF is not a single silver bullet to end opioid and heroin abuse, it's a common sense solution that will help the hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers who abuse opioids and the hundreds we lose each year to overdose."

The approved legislation prohibits pharmacists from substituting an abuse-deterrent opioid product without a new prescription from the prescribing doctor, Murphy said. Further, the legislation mandates insurance companies cover at least one abuse-deterrent drug for every opioid drug it covers, limits a consumer's cost sharing to that of brand non-abuse deterrents, and prohibits an insurer from requiring a patient take a non-abuse deterrent opioid before receiving an abuse-deterrent version.

"The recent hearings our task force has hosted throughout the state provided multiple accounts of over prescribing by medical doctors," Murphy continued. "Abuse-deterrent technology has the potential to address the medical needs of patients in pain without subjecting them to the potential risks of addictive pain killers. This will ensure a full recovery without accidentally falling victim to the perils of opioid addiction."