



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Terrence Murphy

Murphy Announces \$25k Grant For Drug Crisis in Our Backyard

TERRENCE P. MURPHY July 30, 2015

| ISSUE: **FAMILIES, FINANCE, HEALTH, CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES, DRUGS**

| COMMITTEE: **HEROIN TASK FORCE**



MAHOPAC, NY - Steve and Susan Salomone have a story that parents across the Hudson Valley have come to relate to: their son Justin died of a heroin overdose in 2012. As a result of his death, the Salomones, along with the Christensen family of Somers, founded the advocacy group Drug Crisis in Our Backyard. At a press conference earlier today, State Senator Terrence Murphy, who serves as the co-chairman of the Senate's Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Abuse, announced a \$25,000 state grant in an effort to expand the program's reach throughout the community.

"I have been proud to partner with the families involved in Drug Crisis in Our Backyard since they founded their organization," Murphy said. "They have turned their tragedies into a mission and have done a phenomenal job shedding light on the heroin and opioid epidemic that has now been recognized by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as a national concern."

Earlier this month it was widely reported that the CDC recognized the ongoing heroin and opioid abuse as a nationwide epidemic. Reports showed heroin overdose deaths in the country increased by 286% between 2002 and 2013. Moreover, the CDC identified a direct correlation between prescription opioid use and heroin. In fact, individuals who are addicted to pain medication such as Vicodin and OxyContin are 40 times more likely to be addicted to heroin because the chemicals are essentially the same.

"Statistics are showing us that young people are not starting with heroin," said Putnam County Executive MaryEllen Odell. "They are getting hooked on prescribed pain killers or are taking pills out of their home medicine cabinets and moving onto heroin. Events such as today's Prescription Drug Drop-Off Program help keep pills off the streets and away from youth."

"Senator Murphy has been an incredible advocate and ally in our mission to raise awareness and provide education to families and individuals struggling with addiction," said co-founder Steve Salomone. "This grant will aid us in expanding our program to offer additional services to families in need, and more importantly, increase our ability to educate members of our community about the devastating destruction opioid and heroin abuse can have."

County Executive Odell added, "In Putnam County We have created the One Army on the War on Addiction and are committed to combating the addiction epidemic on multiple

fronts - through education, awareness, treatment and the law. It is great to see Senator Murphy, who has been one of our partners in the Army, help secure a \$25,000 grant for Drug Crisis in our Backyard, another partner in the Army. The funds will go far in advancing outreach and awareness."

Mike Piazza, Putnam County's Commissioner of Social Services said, "The opioid addiction continues to be a scourge here in Putnam County. In the past four years the epidemic has created a number of hardships on our law enforcement and emergency rooms, but most importantly, the greatest cost is to the families who witness the pain of addiction to opioid and heroin. We congratulate Drug Crisis in our Backyard who continues to shed light on this issue and brings solutions to the forefront here in Putnam County."

Carmel Supervisor Ken Schmitt said, "I'd like to thank Senator Murphy, the Salomone's, the Christensen's and the Carmel Police Department for their continued efforts toward eradicating this epidemic not only Carmel but in New York State and across the nation. We all need to stay committed, and continue the fight to win the war on opioid addiction and abuse. We have to continue to educate our community and bring awareness about this terrible situation and we can only do that if we work together collectively, including putting pressure on the medical community.