



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrea Stewart-Cousins

## Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins Supports Legislation to Combat the Rising Heroin and Opioid Abuse Crisis

ANDREA STEWART-COUSINS June 19, 2014

Albany, NY - Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins, the Democratic Conference Leader, supports an agreement by Governor Cuomo and legislative leaders on a package of reforms to combat the growing heroin epidemic facing communities throughout New York State.

"Within the last decade opioid use, particularly among young adults, has risen at an alarming and unacceptable rate," Democratic Conference Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins said. "We have a responsibility to combat this addictive and deadly substance and educate the public against its use. This package of bills is a step in the right direction. These laws will be an effective tool in fighting the heroin and opioid scourge that our state is facing. "

Heroin abuse has been increasing at dangerously high rates in recent years. In 2013, there were 89,269 cases of heroin and prescription opiate abuse treatment admissions in New York State, a substantial increase from 63,793 in 2004. During this same time period, opioid abuse rates among young New Yorkers, aged 18 to 24, disproportionately rose which clearly illustrates that this crisis is impacting children and young adults. Nationally, as many as 467,000 people were reportedly abusing heroin or suffering from heroin dependence in 2012.

Senator Stewart-Cousins noted that members of the Senate Democratic Conference have led the way on addressing this heroin crisis and have held forums, produced reports and

introduced multiple pieces of legislation regarding the rising heroin and opioid crisis, many of which were included in the agreed upon heroin bill package.

The pieces of legislation agreed upon will:

- Improve Measures to Support Addiction Treatment;
- Create New Penalties to Help Crack Down on Illegal Drug Distribution;
- Provide Informational Cards in Naloxone Anti-Overdose Kits to Help Save Lives;
- Create a teen heroin abuse PSA campaign; and
- Expand Public Education Campaigns to Prevent Opioid and Heroin Use.

Senator Stewart-Cousins concluded. “I commend our partners in government, the Governor and legislative leaders, for coming together to address this devastating heroin and opioid abuse crisis. I am proud of my efforts, and those of my Democratic Senate colleagues, and I look forward to passing these common sense bills immediately.”