



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael H. Ranzenhofer

Major Progress in the Battle Against Addiction

SENATOR MICHAEL H. RANZENHOFER August 17, 2016

| ISSUE: **COMBATING HEROIN AND OPIOID ADDICTION**

Look for...

Senator Mike Ranzenhofer's
Monthly Column

...In your local newspaper
the third week of every month

Senator Ranzenhofer's column appeared in the Amherst and Clarence Bees on August 17th. Heroin and opioid addiction continues to destroy far too many lives across Western New York. It has been felt in every corner of our community, leaving too many individuals and families heartbroken.

As I mentioned in my June column, all of us share the common goal of overcoming this crisis, and we have to work together to find solutions.

That is why I am pleased to report that I recently helped to pass new groundbreaking laws, at the conclusion of the 2016 Legislative Session, to stem the tide of this epidemic. Earlier this summer, I joined the Governor at Evergreen Health Services when this comprehensive legislative package was signed into law.

These new laws will establish our state as the leader in the battle against addiction by enhancing insurance coverage for individuals seeking treatment and recovery services. Additionally, the new measures expand access to addiction treatment opportunities and extend the length of time a person can receive these life-saving services.

In an effort to prevent addiction, one aspect of the landmark legislation limits initial opioid prescriptions from 30 to seven days. A practitioner may then prescribe any appropriate renewal, refill, or other prescription after the initial seven-day supply. This will help to address overprescribing medications, while ensuring patients with chronic conditions are able to receive their regular dosage.

In addition to these crucial measures, I organized a special community forum in May as a member of the Senate Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Addiction. This forum and others across the state have been instrumental in securing \$189 million in funding to strengthen prevention, treatment, recovery and education services.

This includes an increase of \$25 million above Governor Cuomo's budget proposal. I have been a strong proponent of this funding. Some of the additional \$25 million will support the following important initiatives:

- \$1.3 million for 270 new treatment beds, providing a much needed expansion to treatment opportunities;
- \$1 million in continued funding to supply the public with overdose prevention kits;
- \$1.7 million for 20 new On-Call Peer programs, assisting individuals with substance use

disorders in emergency rooms in connecting to treatment;

- \$1.9 million for 11 new Adolescent Clubhouses, providing safe and welcoming spaces for teens and young adults who are at risk; and
- \$3.2 million for 16 new Recovery Community and Outreach Centers, providing support in a comfortable environment including education and information on how to access treatment services and wellness activities.

While there are no easy answers or quick fixes to solving this public health crisis, these new measures will help prevent future tragedies.

My work on this critical issue is only the first step, and I am committed to working collaboratively to help thousands of New Yorkers overcome addiction.