



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

George Amedore

## AMEDORE INTRODUCES BILL TO ALLOW MEDICAL MARIJUANA TO BE USED AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO OPIOIDS

GEORGE AMEDORE May 31, 2018



Senator George Amedore, co-Chair of the Senate Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Abuse and Senator Kemp Hannon, Chair of the Senate Health Committee today announced legislation (S.8820) that would allow the use of medical marijuana as an alternative to opioids in certain instances. The bill is expected to advance through the Senate Health Committee on Thursday, May 31st.

Under current law, medical marijuana can be used to help manage chronic pain. This bill

would allow medical marijuana to be used as an alternative to opioids to treat episodic pain for conditions expected to last less than three months.

“When faced with patients who are at high risk for addiction, or are in recovery, physicians need an alternative to help with pain management without the inherent risks that come with prescription opioids,” said Senator George Amedore. “We know medicinal marijuana can be an effective pain management tool for chronic pain – this legislation addresses a gap that we have heard about from many physicians and patients when it comes to pain management. This bill helps patients, and ultimately, will help reduce the use of highly addictive opioids.”

"We continue to struggle with this public health crisis," stated Senator Hannon. "Equipping doctors with all of the resources available to them to fight this statewide scourge is essential. Although we have passed crucial legislation and have invested millions towards education, prevention and treatment, more must be done."

Senator Terrence Murphy, a cosponsor of the legislation, said, "The opioid epidemic continues to take lives all across New York. We must find alternative options for pain relief in order to help those in need. Through New York's expansion of medical marijuana we have seen a number of successes from patients suffering from conditions such as epilepsy, Parkinson's disease or PTSD. By closing the gap on episodic pain we will further reduce the number of opioids being prescribed and help New Yorkers get healthy again. I applaud my colleagues Senator Amedore and Senator Hannon for spearheading such an important issue and for their continued leadership in this critical fight."

Senator Fred Akshar said, “This bill is a perfect example of the Task Force taking a bottom-up

approach by listening to the doctors, treatment experts, those struggling with addiction and their families to develop solutions to fill gaps in treatment. This will be one more tool to help our communities across our state fight the scourge of heroin and opioid addiction.”

Senator Tom O’Mara said, “The Senate continues to take action to try to address this public health crisis through a range of short and long-term strategies. Senator Amedore’s legislation advances an important, reasonable, and potentially effective prevention alternative for high risk patients, and I am grateful for the opportunity to help support its enactment.”

New York State’s Compassionate Care Act, which went into effect in January 2016, allowed medical marijuana to be used for the treatment of debilitating or life-threatening diseases, or conditions that cause chronic pain.

This legislation amends the public health law to allow the use of medical marijuana as an alternative to opioids for episodic pain when the condition is expected to last less than three months and the patient’s medical record contains a written treatment plan that follows generally accepted guidelines.

“We continue to be faced with an opioid epidemic that is devastating communities throughout this state,” said Senator Amedore. “We need to do everything possible to address this issue from all sides, and ensuring there is an alternative to opioids is an important prevention measure for high risk patients, or those that have already overcome addiction.”

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## 2017-S8820

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- Introduced
- - In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
- - Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
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Includes opioid use as a condition permitting the use of medical marihuana

May 22, 2018

In Senate Committee **Finance**

Sponsored by **George Amedore**

Do you support this bill?