



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

O'Mara and colleagues on Senate Task Force release report: O'Mara says local input drives recommendations to strengthen treatment and prevention, education and enforcement

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Albany, N.Y., October 24—State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats), a member of the Senate Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Addiction, today joined the task force co-chairs and other members to release a comprehensive report detailing a series of recommendations for state-level actions to further address the burgeoning heroin and opioid addiction crisis impacting communities across the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions, and statewide.

The report follows and continues to build on a series of public forums the task force has held across the state since 2014, including forums O'Mara sponsored in Elmira and Penn Yan.

"What the Senate task force has heard directly from the local front lines in fighting this heroin and opioid crisis is the foundation we're building on. This local input, which has been reflected in actions we've taken over the past several years as well as in this year's state budget, helps us target the necessary responses and will keep our strategies as up to date as possible," said O'Mara. "This crisis is devastating lives in Penn Yan, Hornell, Ithaca, Elmira, and many other communities throughout the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions, and statewide. Local input has been the driving force behind the recommendations we're putting forth now to build on and strengthen the state-local partnership that's going to be critical to putting in place

the most effective combination of law enforcement, awareness and education, and treatment and prevention. We need to keep acting and keep working, and we will."

The bipartisan Senate task force was created at a time when local police departments and addiction centers, including many across the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions, were pointing to the alarming rise in the availability and use of heroin and opioids. Since its formation, significant resources have been committed to examining the multi-faceted causes and effects of the heroin and opioid crisis, and to finding solutions. State funding has nearly doubled to nearly \$250 million in this year's budget.

The report details the Task Force's continuation of a four-pronged approach – focusing on prevention, treatment, recovery, and enforcement – in developing legislative and budgetary recommendations following extensive collaboration with stakeholders at the forums and hearings. Among many actions highlighted in today's report, legislation spearheaded by the task force has served as a national model for other states and in the creation of the federal Substance Use-Disorder Prevention that Promotes Opioid Recovery and Treatment (SUPPORT) for Patients and Communities Act recently passed by Congress.

The report's 11 recommendations form a comprehensive plan to utilize public and private resources to help underserved populations and others without access to treatment, as well as improve the support systems already in place to combat the state's evolving fight against opioid abuse.

The full report, which includes more information on the recommendations and details about numerous legislative actions spearheaded by the Senate task force, is attached above.