



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Elaine Phillips

Senator Phillips Announces Senate Task Force On Heroin And Opioid Addiction Releases Comprehensive Report And Recommendations

ELAINE PHILLIPS October 25, 2018

THE NYS SENATE: **COMBATING HEROIN & OPIOID ABUSE**



Report Examines Current Challenges Facing Individuals, Institutions, and Communities and Provides 11 Proposals to Help End the State's Deadly Epidemic

Senator Elaine Phillips, a member of the New York State Senate Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Addiction, announced that the Task Force issued a new and comprehensive report describing steps currently being taken to address the state's opioid crisis and the ways New York can continue to lead. The report includes a series of 11 detailed recommendations to

help build upon the progress being made to save lives and rebuild families.

“The heroin and opioid epidemic is far from over and communities throughout Long Island and the entire state, continue to be devastated in the wake of addiction,” said Senator Phillips. “My colleagues and I have been meeting with stakeholders to gather information through localized forums and we are learning that while some efforts are working, gaps in the safety net remain and the fight continues. As Senator, I remain committed to our multi-pronged approach – and ensuring law enforcement officials, treatment providers and addiction specialists have the proper resources and tools to support prevention, treatment and recovery.”

Since the Senate Majority formed its Task Force in 2014, significant resources have been committed to examining the multi-faceted causes and effects of the heroin and opioid crisis and working to find innovative solutions. There has been extensive stakeholder outreach through dozens of hearings and forums, with nine held throughout the state, including Mineola, in the last two years alone. State funding has also nearly doubled to a record \$247 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 the many new state laws highlighted in the Task Force report and passed this session is a measure taking effect this week to prohibit “patient brokering” that aggressively targets people in need of substance use disorder treatment in exchange for a fee. Legislation spearheaded by the Task Force has also 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.

While some statistics may indicate a slowing of the meteoric rise of opioid deaths – potentially due to many of the steps New York has already taken to reduce opioid abuse – the Task Force is committed to doing more to prevent additional loss of life. 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. They include:

- Increase resources to support the recruitment and retention of healthcare professionals trained to treat substance use disorder;
- Upgrade the I-STOP Prescription Monitoring Program to improve interstate monitoring of potential over-prescribing of opioids;
- Maximize federal funding to help support more children at the state's newly-established Infant Recovery Centers;
- Reduce the cost of naloxone to ensure greater access to this life-saving overdose-reversal medication and enhance public education and outreach on naloxone use and expiration to ensure effective treatment;
- Explore the further limitation of initial opioid prescriptions for acute pain to three days from the current seven days, with certain medical exceptions;
- Require enhanced treatment plans for patients after the first month of opioid use, instead of waiting until the current 90-day standard;
- Further address addiction in rural parts of the state by improving access to treatment, such as establishing Centers for Excellence on Substance Use Disorder;
- Authorize hospital-community-healthcare-SUD treatment professional collaboration programs to facilitate innovation in meeting community health care needs;

- Improve the use and collection of data to better identify, investigate, and prosecute high-volume opioid prescribers;
- Enhance and create appropriate criminal penalties for drug dealers who sell substances that result in death; and
- Expand health insurance coverage options for medical marijuana as a method to reduce overall usage of opioid medications

To view the full report which includes more information on the recommendations and details about the numerous state legislative victories spearheaded by the Task Force, go to https://www.nysenate.gov/sites/default/files/article/attachment/nys_senate_heroin_and_opioid_recommendations_2018.pdf . In addition, footage of the forums, and other related Senate Task Force materials can be found at <https://www.nysenate.gov/committees/heroin-task-force>.