



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pete Harckham

Harckham Tours Upstate New York, Toronto, Seeking Ways to Halt the Opioid Addiction Epidemic

PETE HARCKHAM September 5, 2019

| ISSUE: **COMBAT HEROIN AND OPIOID ADDICTION, JOINT TASK FORCE ON OPIOIDS, SENATOR HARCKHAM, SD 40**



(Peekskill, NY) New York State Senator Pete Harckham, 40th Senate District, Chair of the NYS Senate Committee on Alcoholism and Substance Abuse, toured facilities in upstate New York and Toronto last week, gathering information on the state's approach to drug use and treatment, as well as innovative best practices and new interventions that will help save lives and halt the opioid addiction epidemic. The tours of Toronto healthcare facilities were

spearheaded by Senator Gustavo Rivera and focused on safe consumption centers as well as Canada's single payer health care system.

Last Monday, Harckham and his two co-chairs, Senator Gustavo Rivera and Senator David Carlucci, from the Joint Senate Task Force on Opioids, Addiction & Overdose Prevention, held the second of seven scheduled hearings/roundtables across the state, at the Madison County Office Building in Wampsville, NY. Subsequent hearings and roundtables will take place in Buffalo, Staten Island, the Hudson Valley, Long Island, and Albany.

"Opioid and other substance use disorders are ravaging our communities, claiming way too many lives, in all age groups," said Harckham. "This week's roundtable, as well as the tours of sites and facilities in upstate New York and Toronto, allowed us to hear directly from stakeholders and innovative institutions, to better understand how we can save lives through improved programs, better allocation of funds and new legislation."

Highlights of Harckham's five day tour - August 26-30:

New York State

- Co-chaired roundtable convened by the Joint Task Force on Opioids, Addiction & Overdose Prevention in Wampsville, NY, to hear testimony from stakeholders involved in opioid addiction treatment and prevention. Stakeholder presenters included operators of treatment centers, medical professionals, mental health professionals, former substance abusers, law enforcement, family members and lawmakers. (With NYS Senators Rachel May, David Carlucci, Betty Little and Gustavo Rivera)

- Breakfast at the Second Chance Diner in Camillus, NY. Owner Eddie DePalma, a recovering heroin addict who has been clean for four years, opened the traditional diner in 2018 and has been serving up hope for other substance abusers with his successful venture. He hires

people in recovery - offering a much needed job and support for those recovering from substance use disorder. The popular diner serves breakfast and lunch and even offers state fair treats deep fried candy bars and Oreos. The blueberry pancakes were spectacular!

(With NYS Senator Rachel May)

- Toured the Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center in Buffalo to learn about the protocol they implemented in 2019 to reduce opioid use. At Roswell, the number of prescribed opioids was dramatically reduced after surgery, without detrimental effect. Their two-year study, released in 2018, found postsurgical pain can be managed with few or no opioids. During its first year alone, the restrictive protocol eliminated the circulation of 16,374 opioid tablets (5 mg oxycodone equivalent), significantly reducing the volume of opioids that could be misused or diverted. The results of the study in 1,231 patients demonstrate that because postoperative pain can be managed effectively without opioids for minor or minimally invasive surgical procedures or with only a three-day supply for major surgery, the risks of chronic opioid misuse can be managed by reducing or eliminating opioid prescriptions in the first place. (With NYS Senators Timothy Kennedy, Gustavo Rivera, and Patrick Gallivan)

- Toured Mom & Baby/NICU unit at Sisters of Charity Hospital in Buffalo. The hospital is working on substance use disorder treatment programs for pregnant women and babies born dependent and are hoping to expand their interventions. They focus on compassionate care for mothers, who are substance abusers, and their newborn babies. They have found that the best medicine for a baby who is born dependent is having their mother close and consuming breast milk, even if the milk contains trace amounts of whatever substance the mother had been using. Because it takes five days to detox a baby, and mothers are only covered by insurance for a two to three day stay following childbirth, the hospital has created larger rooms for the babies so that a mother is able to stay with her baby even

though she has been discharged as a patient. (With Senator Timothy Kennedy)

Toronto

- Tour of supervised consumption services The NYS Senate group toured a facility offering supervised consumption services at Parkdale Queen West Community Health Centre.

Supervised consumption services are harm reduction-based health services that provide a safe and confidential environment where it is legal to possess and consume drugs via injection, intranasal (snorting) and oral (pills). In addition to supervised consumption, individuals are provided with harm reduction supplies, education on safer drug use, overdose prevention and intervention, medical and counseling services, and referrals to housing, income support and other services. (With NYS Senators Gustavo Rivera, Diane J. Savino, Roxanne J. Persaud)

The Senators also attended general health care presentations in Toronto to learn more about Canada's single payer health care system, including:

- Canadian health policy overview with Dr. Greg Marchildon, Professor, University of Toronto
- Tour of St. Michael's Hospital led by hospital staff and Dr. Dan Raza, staff physician, St. Michael's Hospital and Chair, Canadian Doctors for Medicare