



**PRESS RELEASE**  
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## **New York Commemorates Fentanyl Awareness Day**

*Senator Martinez announces passage of legislation to reduce Fentanyl overdoses and deaths*

**ALBANY, N.Y.** - Yesterday was Fentanyl Awareness Day, a solemn public reminder of the devastating toll this synthetic opioid continues to exact on our communities. Fentanyl, up to 50 times stronger than heroin and 100 times more potent than morphine, has become alarmingly prevalent, with over 73,000 deaths attributed to it in the United States during 2022, with 4,950 of those occurring in New York State.

Now, in an effort to save the lives of New Yorkers, the state Senate has approved [legislation](#) sponsored by Senator Monica R. Martinez requiring the inclusion of Fentanyl test strips, along with informational cards about their uses, in opioid antagonist kits—commonly known as Narcan—provided by the state. The strips allow users to test for the presence of fentanyl before consuming the dose, as part of what is considered a harm reduction strategy. The approach has already been successfully adopted in some local communities within the state, including on Long Island, where both Suffolk and Nassau Counties have programs.

"Fentanyl is killing our communities. It is taking the lives of mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, and children," said Senator Martinez. "With the passage of this bill, we are equipping individuals with the knowledge and tools they need to protect themselves and their loved ones from the deadly threat of fentanyl."

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The initiative, which has also passed in the Assembly, must still be signed by the governor before it is enacted.

During 2023, the United States Drug Enforcement Agency [reported](#) seizing enough fentanyl to provide over 376.7 million lethal doses, more than enough to kill every American. Fentanyl is often disguised and mixed with other drugs, posing a grave risk even to those with little or no prior problematic drug use, making awareness and prevention paramount.

In addition to the fentanyl test strip legislation, Senator Martinez is also the lead sponsor of the [bill](#) establishing May 7, 2024, as Fentanyl Awareness Day in the State of New York.