



**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**

**JOINT SENATE TASK FORCE ON OPIOIDS, ADDICTION  
& OVERDOSE PREVENTION**

**ORAL TESTIMONY BY INVITATION ONLY**  
*(Written testimony is welcome)*

**SUBJECT:** New York's response to drug use and the overdose crisis

**PURPOSE:** To hear from stakeholders on strategies for reducing overdoses, improving individual and community health, and addressing the harmful consequences of drug use.

**Thursday, October 3, 2019  
1 PM – 5 PM  
Putnam County Training and  
Operations Center  
112 Old Route 6  
Carmel, New York 10512**

Senators Gustavo Rivera, Pete Harckham and David Carlucci, Co-Chairs of the New York State Joint Senate Task Force on Opioids, Addiction and Overdose Prevention, will be holding a public hearing to examine current approaches and consider new strategies for how New York responds to drug use and to the epidemic of overdoses and deaths caused each year by the problematic use of drugs.

According to the NYS Department of Health, 3,257 New Yorkers died in 2017 as a result of opioids, including 400 residents of the Hudson Valley. Also, in 2017, Sullivan County had the second highest rate of overdose deaths caused by opioids in New York State.

Both the State and many localities have taken numerous steps to reduce the number of deaths, including increasing the availability of substance use disorder (SUD) treatment, expanding access to Naloxone, providing funding for SUD treatment in jails, establishing 24/7 drop-off centers (and other law enforcement diversion opportunities) for individuals in need of help, requiring hospitals to establish policies aimed at increasing access to medication assisted treatment, removing barriers to insurance coverage, and mandating changes to prescribing practices.

Yet, in spite of these changes, overdose deaths in the region involving opioids increased by 9% between 2016 and 2017. Of the seven counties in the region, four saw increases in the number of

deaths over this period, while three saw decreases. The increases were especially significant in Dutchess and Sullivan Counties.

Separately, drug use results in a host of other consequences for those who currently use or formerly used drugs and their families, including worse health, increased involvement in the criminal justice system and the child welfare system, increases in homelessness, and greater barriers to employment.

This hearing will be an opportunity for the Task Force and the public to hear from stakeholders.

Areas to explore will include:

- The impact of steps taken by the State and counties so far on access to treatment, as well as the impact on the health and other aspects of the lives of those who use drugs;
- What additional steps need to be taken to reduce the number of overdoses and deaths;
- Strategies for best addressing the health and service needs of people who use drugs;
- How to support the success of people who want to stop using drugs;
- How to better utilize current state investments to address drug use and overdoses and what additional resources are needed;
- How to decrease the number of individuals incarcerated as a result of a substance use disorder; and
- How to address other consequences of drug use on the lives of those who currently use or formerly used drugs.

**Oral testimony is by invitation only and will be limited to 3 minutes in duration followed by questions from the committee members.** Fifteen copies of any prepared testimony should be submitted at the hearing registration desk. Written testimony is welcome and may be emailed to [nyoverdosetaskforce@nysenate.gov](mailto:nyoverdosetaskforce@nysenate.gov).

In order to meet the needs of those who may have a disability, the Senate, in accordance with its policy of non-discrimination on the basis of disability, as well as the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), has made its facilities and services available to all individuals with disabilities. For individuals with disabilities, accommodations will be provided, upon reasonable request, to afford such individuals access and admission to Senate facilities and activities.

**New York State Joint Senate Task Force on Opioids,  
Addiction and Overdose Prevention**  
Senator Pete Harckham, Co-Chair  
Senator David Carlucci, Co-Chair  
Senator Gustavo Rivera, Co-Chair