



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrew J. Lanza

Lanza Sponsors Prescription Drug Bill to Fight Abuse & Addiction

ANDREW J LANZA June 15, 2011

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Lanza Partners With Assemblyman Cusick, DA Dan Donovan & Attorney General Eric Schneiderman to Target Prescription Drug Addiction – Part Of National Movement to Address America’s Prescription Drug Crisis

“I-STOP” Legislation Would Improve Health Care, Monitor Potential Abuses Like ‘Doc-Shopping’

NEW YORK – Addressing the growing wave of prescription drug abuses in New York State, lawmakers today unveiled legislation that would create an online database to report and track the prescription and dispensing of certain controlled substances.

The “Internet System for Tracking Over-Prescribing Act,” or “I-STOP,” would provide health care practitioners and pharmacists with centralized information to avoid over-prescribing, help shut down prescription drug trafficking, and identify and treat patients who seek to abuse prescription drugs. The bill expands on a proposal made by Senator Andrew J. Lanza and Assemblyman Michael Cusick.

“The rise of prescription drug abuse in New York and across the country demands a better system for both our health care providers and law enforcement officials to track the flow of potentially dangerous substances,” **Attorney General Schneiderman** said. “I-STOP utilizes our online technology to streamline communication between health care providers and pharmacists to better serve patients, stop prescription drug trafficking, and provide treatment to those who are addicted.”

Senator Andrew J. Lanza said, “The legislation would allow our physicians and pharmacists to access real-time prescription histories to ensure that patients’ prescription use is legitimate – not lethal. I am proud to sponsor the Attorney General’s legislation to improve health care service, and help shut down prescription drug trafficking and abuse.”

Assemblyman Michael Cusick said, “The information gap between doctors and pharmacists allows addicts and abusers to slip through our regulatory cracks. The Attorney General’s legislation will better coordinate health care services so that patients receive the medication they need, while addicts and those who profit off of abuse receive the treatment they deserve.”

Staten Island District Attorney Daniel M. Donovan Jr. said, “I commend the Attorney General on his efforts to create a database that would help law enforcement and the medical community combat prescription drug abuse – similar to a national prescription drug database that would be created under legislation I have worked on with Congressman Michael Grimm. I only hope the other 49 state Attorneys General follow Mr. Schneiderman’s lead.”

According to the federal Office of National Drug Control Policy, prescription drug abuse is the country’s second most prevalent illegal drug problem, and recent reports and studies have documented corresponding data in the state. For example:

- Oxycodone prescriptions rose 66 percent in New York City from 2007 to 2009, with a great number of those prescriptions filled in Staten Island;
- In Buffalo, New York’s largest methadone clinic outside of New York City, Catholic Health System, is beginning to reorganize its service to accommodate an increase in care needed to treat the number of addicted expected mothers and their newborns;
- This past summer, as the drug manufacturer of OxyContin altered its current formula to prevent abuse, prescriptions for another opioid, Opana ER increased. In Nassau County, Medicaid prescriptions for OxyContin decreased 43 percent, while Medicaid prescriptions for Opana ER increased 45 percent during the same time period.

I-STOP would amend the New York State Public Health Law to establish a controlled substance reporting system by setting up an online, real-time database. Health care practitioners and pharmacists would be required to report specific information to the database when Schedule II, III, IV, and V controlled substances are prescribed and dispensed. Such controlled substances include: oxycodone and morphine (Schedule II); vicodin (Schedule III); Xanax and Klonopin (Schedule IV); and pyrovalerone (Schedule V).

In addition to reporting the information, practitioners and pharmacists will be required to consult the I-STOP database before prescribing and dispensing a Schedule II, III, IV, or V controlled drug. Practitioners will be able to ensure, among other things, that the prescription is “medically necessary,” and that the patient receiving the prescription is not an addict or habitual user. Pharmacists will be able to ensure that the prescription presented matches prescription data reported by a practitioner to the I-STOP database. The New York State Department of Health will be responsible for maintaining the database.

This enhancement of the state’s prescription drug monitoring program will assist in patient care, and also help crack down on ‘doc-shopping,’ the practice of visiting several different doctors and pharmacies for prescription drugs. With real-time information, physicians and pharmacists will be able to track potential abuses, treat addiction, and stop those who enable and profit off of the illegitimate use of prescribed drugs.

I-STOP would also require practitioners, pharmacists and law enforcement officials to complete continuing education programs on the proper uses of the substance reporting system. The proposed legislation prohibits the disclosure of all the data collected in the online database, unless authorized by law. Prescription drug monitoring programs operate in 43 states.