



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jack M. Martins

Senator Martins Introduces Bill to Discourage Prescription Drug Abuse

JACK M. MARTINS January 18, 2012

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A multi-prong approach is needed to combat an epidemic that has reached a critical point in New York State. Senator Jack M. Martins has proposed a law in New York State that would encourage the use of medications that are tamper resistant in an effort to decrease prescription drug abuse on Long Island and in New York State.

According to a report by the New York State Attorney General, the number of prescription painkillers has increased from 16.6 million in 2007 to 22.5 million in 2010, an increase of almost 36 percent in New York. During that time, Oxycodone prescriptions have increased by 82 percent. According to the report, painkiller overdoses led to nearly 15,000 deaths in 2008.

With opioids, a drug abuser can crush the medication in order to snort or inject it to get high. However, drug companies have developed tamper-resistant opioids so that if the medication is tampered with or broken, its effect will be negated or made impossible to break down sufficiently to be snorted or injected.

Senator Martins has introduced a bill (S6062) that prohibits the substitution of a non-tamper resistant opioid analgesic drug when a doctor prescribes a tamper resistant one. Under

Senator Martins' bill, when a physician prescribes an opioid analgesic drug with tamper-resistant technology, no substitution or interchange shall be permitted without the pharmacy obtaining the prior, written consent of the prescribing physician.

"Prescription drug abuse is a serious problem that has reached epidemic proportions. It needs to be tackled from multiple directions. This is one measure we can take to make it more difficult to abuse commonly prescribed opioids," said Senator Martins. "This bill makes opioids less attractive to drug abusers – a big step in addressing the epidemic we face."

The bill, which is being sponsored in the Assembly by Assemblyman Harry Bronson (D-Rochester), has received support from the Dr. Jeffrey Reynolds of the Long Island Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (LICADD), the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, New York Osteopathic Medical Society (NYSOMS), and the Center for Lawful Access and Abuse Deterrence. (CLADD).

"NYSOMS supports the development of abuse-deterrent formulations or tamper resistant formulations of opioid medications and other drugs with abuse potential. Products incorporating tamper-resistant technologies can play an important role in offering physicians the autonomy and opportunity to prescribe opioid medications that cannot be easily misused or abused," wrote NYSOMS President Sonia Rivera Martinez, DO, in a memorandum of support.

OxyContin, a popularly prescribed pain medication, has a tamper-resistant version.