



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Stephen M. Saland

## Senator Saland Announces Bill to Address Rising Prescription Drug Abuse

STEPHEN M. SALAND June 11, 2012

| ISSUE: **PRESCRIBED DRUGS OR PRESCRIPTIONS**

### *A Real-Time Registry for Tracking Prescription Drugs Among Tools to Combat Epidemic*

Senator Steve Saland (R-I-C, Poughkeepsie) partnered with his Senate colleagues to pass legislation, the Internet System for Tracking Over-Prescribing (I-STOP), that would create a real-time database within the Department of Health to track prescription medications and help identify abuse, fraud, and diversion within the health care system.

According to federal reports, prescription drug abuse is the nation's fastest growing drug problem. Data has shown that nearly one-third of people aged twelve and over who used drugs for the first time in 2009 began by using a prescription drug non-medically. New York has reported that in 2010, 22 million painkiller prescriptions were dispensed – a 40% increase in 5 years, and roughly 2 million more prescriptions for pain medications than there are citizens in the state.

As these numbers rise, the state faces resultant strains on the public health and criminal justice systems. "In this year alone, we have seen the high profile arrest of residents of the Hudson Valley for their participation in violent drug rings specializing in the distribution of prescription drugs. This legislation arms law enforcement and public health officials with

additional tools to track the diversion, target abuse, and bring these people to justice,” said Senator Saland.

The I-STOP bill will provide valuable information to providers, pharmacists, and governmental entities to monitor the distribution of these medications – rooting out “doctor-shopping,” fraud, and illegal circulation. The legislation would also make provisions for electronic prescribing, a pain medication awareness program, and a safe disposal program for controlled substances.

“This epidemic has reached our communities, our schools, and our homes – it is a public health crisis that has resulted in tragic criminal cases. The time to fight this problem is now,” concluded Senator Saland.