



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

Senate Passes “I-Stop” to Reduce Prescription Drug Abuse

CATHARINE YOUNG June 12, 2012

ALBANY – Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I – Olean) announced that the state Senate passed legislation to curb the escalating problem of prescription drug abuse.

The bill (S7637), co-sponsored by Senator Young, makes a significant change to the way prescription drugs are distributed and monitored in New York.

“This legislation seeks to prevent deaths from abuse and overdoses of prescription drugs, particularly painkillers by providing ‘real time’ prescription tracking, which supplies more information to doctors and pharmacists. It puts us one step closer to reversing the numbers of deaths caused by prescription drug abuse, which has devastated families and lives throughout the state, including my district,” Senator Young said.

“I-STOP” would promote the safe and effective use of prescription drugs and curb the abuse of such drugs by modernizing the state's Prescription Monitoring Program and enacting the Internet System for Tracking Over-Prescribing Act. The bill also requires all prescriptions to be transmitted by electronic means, updates the State's controlled substance schedules, and expands the duties of the workgroup established under the Prescription Pain Medication Awareness Program with respect to continuing education for practitioners and pharmacists. It further requires the Department of Health (DOH) to

establish a safe disposal program to facilitate consumer disposal of unused medications.

According to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), nearly 15,000 people die every year of overdoses due to prescription painkillers. In 2010, 1 in 20 people in the United States over the age of 11 reported using prescription painkillers for nonmedical reasons in the past year. During the period 1999 through 2008, overdose death rates, sales, and substance abuse treatment admissions related to prescription painkillers all increased substantially.

“Prescription drug abuse has quickly become one of the fastest growing drug problems. The epidemic has affected our communities, schools, and families. We need to fight back, and I commend Governor Cuomo, the Legislature, and the Attorney General for working together to develop this landmark legislation that will stop abuse and save lives,” Senator Young said.

The provisions of the legislation include:

- Creating a modernized and improved “real time” Prescription Monitoring Program (I-STOP) that practitioners and pharmacists can securely and easily access, allowing them to view their patients' controlled substance histories;
- Requiring e-prescribing, making New York a national leader by being one of the first states to move from paper prescriptions to a system mandating electronic prescribing;
- Updating controlled substance schedules to align New York’s Controlled Substances Act with Federal Law and changing the schedules for hydrocodone compounds and tramadol to reduce abuse;
- Enhancing the Prescription Pain Medication Awareness Program to educate the public and health care practitioners about the risks associated with prescribing and taking controlled substance pain medications; and

- Establishing a Safe Disposal Program to increase the options available to safely dispose of unused controlled substances and prevent people who abuse prescription painkillers from obtaining them from friends or relatives.

The bill was sent to the Assembly.