



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrew J. Lanza

## Senator Lanza, Assemblyman Cusick & A.g. Schneiderman Highlight Innovative Program to Prevent Prescription Drug Abuse

ANDREW J LANZA August 27, 2013

*Beginning Today, Doctors Must Check Patients' Narcotic Prescription Histories Before Writing Or Refilling A Prescription*

*Lanza, Cusick & Schneiderman: I-STOP Is A National Model For Fighting The Epidemic Of Prescription Drug Abuse Plaguing Our Communities*

STATEN ISLAND — Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today joined Senator Andrew Lanza, Assemblyman Michael Cusick, Island officials and community leaders from New York to celebrate the implementation of a key component of New York State's innovative program for preventing prescription drug abuse. Authored by Senator Lanza, Assemblyman Cusick and AG Schneiderman and unanimously passed by the Legislature in 2012, the Internet System for Tracking Over-Prescribing (I-STOP) Act is a national model for other states and Congress to follow to curb prescription drug abuse, the nation's fastest-growing drug problem.

I-STOP set up a real-time database that tracks every prescription for opioid pills that gets filled in New York State. Starting today, doctors are required under the law to consult that database before writing any prescriptions for a Schedule II, III, or IV controlled substance, including narcotic painkillers. New York is now the only state in the country with such a verification requirement. This critical tool will provide medical professionals with the

information necessary to detect doctor-shoppers and better serve patients at risk of addiction. This information will also serve to avoid potentially dangerous drug interactions.

Senator Andrew Lanza said, "Too many families on Staten Island and across New York have suffered the loss of a family member or friend as a result of prescription drug abuse. With this new law, New York State is at the forefront of tackling this epidemic, and giving law enforcement and medical professionals the tools they need to stop abuse before it occurs and save lives. The prescription painkiller epidemic is among the most serious threats to the health and welfare of the people across our Nation and I'm hopeful that this new law will provide the model for other states to combat this serious problem. I thank Governor Cuomo, Attorney General Schneiderman, Assemblyman Cusick and Senator Hannon for their efforts on this legislation that will assist the state in our fight against prescription drug abuse."

"This law provides appropriate controls to restrict access of abusers and ensure those who profit from the abuse face the necessary consequences. The PMP Registry which takes effect today will provide up-to-date information for practitioners to review and pharmacists to access and will provide the ability to stop a potential drug abuse problem before it starts. I am confident that I-STOP will help to curtail future abuse and cut down on access to certain addictive medications," said Assemblyman Michael Cusick. "I am grateful for being able to partner with Senator Lanza, Attorney General Schneiderman, Governor Cuomo and Senator Hannon and Assemblyman Gottfried to achieve this landmark law."

"One year ago today, I-STOP became law, creating a national model for smart, coordinated communication between health care providers and pharmacists to better serve patients, stop prescription drug trafficking, and provide treatment to those who need help," said Attorney General Schneiderman. "Illegal trafficking in prescription drugs poses an enormous danger to the public. I-STOP has already started reducing the supply of opioid painkillers on the street, even before mandatory verification took effect. Now, New York is leading the nation

in the fight to protect the public from the devastating consequences of prescription drug abuse.”

Dr. Jeffrey L. Reynolds, Executive Director of the L.I. Council on Alcoholism & Drug Dependence (LICADD), said, “As New York’s opiate crisis continues to claim lives and destroy families, I-STOP has become even more critical since the Legislature approved the new law a year ago. For those of us on the front lines of addiction, today marks a turning point and gives us hope that we can finally stop the flow of opiates into our communities and turn our full attention to getting those who are struggling with addiction into treatment. I thank NYS Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman for his unwavering leadership in protecting public health, along with Assemblyman Cusick and Senator Lanza, who led the bill through their respective houses.”

By requiring pharmacists to report in real time each prescription they fill for a Schedule II, III, IV or V drug and consult the database before filling any prescriptions, I-STOP has helped provide prescribers with as much information as possible as quickly as possible to avoid dangerous drug interactions and to detect drug dealers who use pharmacies as suppliers. Earlier this year, two abused drugs, hydrocodone and tramadol, were rescheduled. Hydrocodone became a Schedule II drug, thereby ending the automatic refills that evaded medical review and served to feed addictions and support street sales. Tramadol, previously unscheduled, became a Schedule IV drug.

I-STOP also established safe disposal programs, providing a place for New Yorkers to get rid of expired and unneeded drugs to ensure that they are not left in medicine cabinets for children or addicts to access.

I-STOP will also deter fraud against private health insurers and the state government. Taxpayers have been paying for a substantial portion of the overprescribed pills through the

Medicaid program – hundreds of millions of dollars each year. Last year, a Staten Island drug trafficker, Michael Mancusi, was convicted by the Attorney General after an investigation revealed he ran a ring of doctor-shoppers, receiving and selling thousands of oxycodone pills. Each ring of collusive patients and prescribers prosecuted by the Attorney General's Medicaid Fraud Control Unit represented a loss to the State of at least \$1 million.

In December 2014, I-STOP will make New York one of the first states to schedule the universal mandate of e-prescribing for all drugs. This system will nearly eliminate the problem of forged, traded, or stolen prescriptions—used both by addicts and criminal organizations to obtain a wide variety of pills to resell on the street and on the black market. These crimes also cost the taxpayers millions.

For more information on New York's innovative I-STOP program, [click here](#).