



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Griffo, Oneida County Leaders Announce Strategy to Combat Heroin

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO June 5, 2014

| ISSUE: **CRIME, CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES, DRUGS, PRESCRIBED DRUGS OR PRESCRIPTIONS, CRIMINAL**



UTICA – Sen. Joseph A. Griffo and Oneida County leaders today outlined additional measures they'll be taking to combat the heroin epidemic.

"I'm proud of the work the Senate Majority Coalition has done statewide to gather input from people affected by this drug scourge," said Griffo, R-Rome. "It's time to take this one step further, and make sure we arm everyone with the tools to combat an opioid overdose."

Oneida County Sheriff Robert M. Maciol announced he has applied for approximately \$4,500 in funding to train and equip 39 deputies with naloxone, a nasal spray that can reverse some of the most dangerous effects of an opioid overdose. The application is to the Office of Attorney General's \$5 million Community Overdose Prevention (COP) program. Each kit includes two vials of naloxone, two mucosal atomization devices for nasal administration, one pair of latex gloves and a booklet on how to use the drug. A full kit costs about \$60 and is good for two years, if kept at room temperature.

"On the streets and in our jails, we are encountering more and more opioid addicts," said Maciol. "When we encounter someone in the throes of overdose, I want my deputies to be prepared to spring into action and help save a life. This training and these kits are essential to our modern policing."

Heroin is not just a law enforcement problem, however. Oneida County Executive Anthony J. Picente Jr. said his Department of Mental Health has held regular meetings with service providers and contract agencies about how to combat the opioid problem through better education and treatment and in January created the Oneida County Opiate Task Force.

The Oneida County Opiate Task Force has looked at numerous key areas of concern that can bridge the gaps in the community when dealing with opiate/heroin abuse. One major step is to provide ongoing education around opiate addiction and services available within the community through a comprehensive Resource Guide. This is just one step in a comprehensive approach to dealing with this community problem.

"Heroin and opiate abuse is a comprehensive and community wide problem and that is exactly how we in Oneida County have approached the solution. The creation of the Oneida County Opiate Task Force has brought together people from, law enforcement, service providers, contract agencies, non-profit organizations and community stakeholders," said Picente.

"The task force is continuing to create workable solutions focused on specific action items including education, treatment and increased services. This is an ongoing problem and I thank all the members of this Task Force as well as Senator Griffo and Sheriff Maciol as they continue their hard work to eradicate this problem from our cities, towns and villages throughout this county," the county executive added.

Griffo also announced that he will soon be partnering with a local addiction specialist to provide opioid overdose prevention training to interested community members. The organization is certified by the state Department of Health to provide the training, and naloxone kits will be given, free of charge, to attendees. The first training will be held in late June, with additional details to be announced at a later date.

This plan of action comes after the New York Senate Joint Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Addiction released its report May 28 that summarized findings from 18 statewide forums and included 25 bills that would address the heroin problem through education, early intervention, treatment and tougher sentencing. The Senate is expected to take up these bills before the summer recess.

Griffo held an April 15 forum in Utica on the heroin epidemic. The full report can be viewed [here](#).