



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Robert G. Ortt

## Joint Senate Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Addiction Announces Forums

ROBERT G. ORTT April 13, 2015

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### *First Round of Dates Scheduled for Yorktown, Rochester, Lewiston, and Albany*

The New York State Senate today announced the schedule for the first round of forums being held by the bipartisan Joint Senate Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Addiction. The Task Force will meet in Yorktown, Rochester, Lewiston, Albany and additional communities to examine the issues created by increased heroin abuse that is causing hundreds of deaths in communities across the state.

The Task Force is co-chaired by Senator Robert Ortt (R-C-I, North Tonawanda), Chairman of the Senate Committee on Mental Health; Senator Terrence Murphy (R-C-I, Yorktown); and Senator George A. Amedore, Jr. (R-C-I, Rotterdam), Chairman of the Senate Committee on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse. The forums will provide an opportunity for Senators to solicit input from stakeholders and experts and use the information collected to develop recommendations for legislative action.

“Communities across New York State are no stranger to opiate and heroin overdoses,” said

Sen. Ortt. "One life lost to this dangerous epidemic is one too many. These forums will help us devise a comprehensive plan that provides solutions for those struggling with substance use and their families. The discussions will allow the Task Force to collect and process important information from victims, family members, law enforcement, and medical professionals in order to better our community and most importantly, save lives."

Recent opiate statistics show a pressing and urgent need to find a solution to this statewide epidemic. Deaths in New York from opiate overdoses are increasing with 34 suspected opiate deaths in Erie County so far this year - 13 of which occurred in just one recent week. And in New York City, the most recent statistics available showed that for the second straight year heroin deaths surpassed homicides with 420 people dying from heroin overdoses compared to 335 homicides in 2013.

The first four forums are being held this spring and will be followed by additional forums in other communities this fall.

### **2015 Joint Senate Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Addiction Schedule**

#### Westchester County:

Thursday, April 30, 7 p.m.: Mildred E. Strang Middle School, 2701 Crompond Rd, Yorktown Heights, NY 10598

#### Monroe County:

Wednesday, May 6, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.: St. John Fisher College Wegmans School of Nursing Building, Room 100, 3690 East Ave., Rochester, NY 14618.

Niagara County:

Thursday, May 7, 4:30 p.m. to 6 p.m.: Niagara University Dunleavy Hall, Room 127, 5795  
Lewiston Rd., Niagara University, NY 14109.

Albany County:

Tuesday, June 2, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.: SUNY Albany D'Ambra Auditorium, Life Sciences Research  
Building, 1400 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12222