



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

George Amedore

## SENATE REPUBLICAN MAJORITY BUDGET TO INCLUDE \$167 MILLION FOR OPIOID ABUSE PREVENTION, TREATMENT, RECOVERY AND EDUCATION

GEORGE AMEDORE March 12, 2016

The co-Chairs of the Joint Senate Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Addiction, Senator George Amedore, Senator Robert Ortt, and Senator Terrence Murphy and Senate Majority Leader John Flanagan today announced the Senate will include a total of \$167 million in funding to strengthen prevention, treatment, recovery, and education services as part of its 2016-17 budget proposal. In addition to this significant funding commitment, the budget proposal also includes legislation to prevent the abuse of opioid prescription drugs.

Senator Flanagan said, “New York must dedicate more resources to specifically target the pervasive and deadly effects of our state’s heroin epidemic. Our conference has helped the state take extensive steps to combat heroin and save lives, but the drug’s grip on all communities, large and small, continues to grow. The Senate Republican proposal reinforces our commitment to provide the tools needed to address the wide-ranging issues created by addiction.”

Senator George Amedore (R-C-I, Rotterdam) said, “As the heroin crisis continues to spread

throughout every community in this State, it's critical that we make a strong investment to properly fund prevention efforts and provide treatment and recovery options to those suffering with addiction issues. The proposals included in the Senate's budget reflect feedback the Task Force has received at several forums held throughout the state, and will provide much-needed resources as we continue our efforts to address this deadly epidemic.”

Senator Robert Ortt (R, North Tonawanda) said, “The heroin epidemic is sweeping across our state at an alarming rate without discrimination of its victims. This budget proposal represents our conference's firm commitment to addressing and ultimately eradicating the epidemic in New York State. From educating the public, to helping addicts, to putting more dealers behind bars, we've put forth proposals to attack each area of this public health crisis. I'm hopeful the Assembly and Governor will follow our lead to deliver resources to communities and families in dire need of relief.”

Senator Terrence Murphy (R-C-I, Yorktown) said, “After a series of task force hearings spanning from Yates County to Brooklyn it has been made abundantly clear that this epidemic has no boundaries. Tackling the growing heroin and opioid crisis begins with properly funding prevention treatment and enforcement initiatives. No amount is too small when it comes to saving lives.”

The Senate accepts the Executive Budget proposal of \$141 million and increases it by more than 18 percent. The \$26 million in additional funds proposed includes:

> \$10 million for transitional housing for individuals in recovery, with 25 percent of these funds to be used for individuals ages 15-24;

- > \$6.5 million for additional recovery services;
- > \$3.85 million for 11 additional Recovery Community Centers. The Executive Budget proposed to expand the number of Recovery Community Centers in the state by six, from the current number of three to a total of nine. The Senate proposal would bring the total to 20, and would require that all centers be distributed on a geographically even basis;
- > \$2 million for school prevention efforts;
- > \$2 million for Recovery Coaches;
- > \$1 million for an additional 10 Family Support Navigators, who will assist New Yorkers and their families with navigating insurance and treatment systems. The Executive Budget proposes 10 Navigators to be regionally distributed statewide and the Senate proposal doubles that commitment to 20, helping to ensure their services would be distributed on a geographically even basis;
- > \$450,000 for opioid drug addiction, prevention and treatment programs; and
- > \$200,000 for Family Support Navigator training.

The Senate is also proposing the inclusion of S6962, a bill sponsored by Senator Kemp Hannon (R, Nassau County), in the budget. This bill helps prevent the abuse of opioid prescription drugs by ensuring that FDA-approved abuse-deterrent drugs are dispensed whenever prescribed and are not interchanged or substituted for an opioid prescription drug lacking abuse-deterrent technology. The bill also requires insurance plans to cover abuse-deterrent opioid prescription drugs at the same level as non-abuse deterrent opioid prescription drugs, prevents insurance plans from requiring a patient take a non-abuse

deterrent opioid drug before a drug containing abuse-deterrent technology and ensures that prior authorization requirements are applied equally to both abuse-deterrent and non-abuse-deterrent opioid prescription drugs.

Today's funding recommendation is the latest in the Senate Republicans' legislative efforts to combat the opioid and heroin crisis – first concentrating on the abuse of prescription painkillers, and then following the opioid addiction trend as it turned to heroin. Deaths from heroin overdoses across the nation escalated 175 percent between 2010 and 2014, and these numbers continue to climb.

Since 2014, the Senate's Joint Senate Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Addiction has held forums that solicit input from stakeholders and experts, and use the information collected to develop recommendations for legislative action. Significant legislation has already been enacted as a result of the Task Force's efforts, and more continues to be developed to address the ongoing crisis. Forums have already been held earlier this year in Oneonta, Penn Yan, and Brooklyn, and another forum is scheduled for April 7, 2016, in Oakdale in Suffolk County. For more information about the ongoing work of the Senate's Joint Senate Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Addiction, go to: <http://www.nysenate.gov/committees/heroin-task-force> .

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