



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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Senate's Joint Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Addiction Releases Report and Legislative Recommendations

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Albany, NY)- The New York State Senate Joint Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Addiction today released a report summarizing findings and recommendations resulting from forums held across the state to address New York's ongoing heroin epidemic. Senator Bonacic (R/C/I-Mt. Hope), a member of the task force, joined his Senate Republican colleagues as well as the task force's Co-Chair's, Senator's Terrence Murphy, Robert Ortt , and George Amedore, in announcing the report's findings which include comprehensive legislative recommendations

to address shortcomings in the state's existing opioid prevention and treatment-delivery strategies.

“This report reinforces the notion that the scourge of heroin and opioid addiction does not affect one region of the state, or one race, or one ethnic group,” said Senator Bonacic. “It’s a global problem that affects everyone, and this report along with its recommendations, is a positive step towards the goal of one day ending this terrible epidemic.”

In its **report**, the Task Force identified a four-pronged approach that would stem the growth of the heroin and opioid crisis - prying loose the stranglehold it has on New York's communities - and supports those battling their addiction on the journey to recovery:

Prevention: increasing awareness to better educate the public of the inherent risks involved in using heroin and prescription opioids, and taking advantage of technological advances available to deter the abuse of prescription drugs and prevent addiction;

Treatment: recognizing the critical need for expanded and improved insurance coverage, and enhancing access to all forms of effective treatment - including inpatient, outpatient, and Medication Assisted Treatment - in order to help individuals return to stable and productive lives;

Recovery: providing the proper supports, such as safe environments, stable employment, and opportunities to participate in diversion programs that avoid incarceration in order to facilitate successful recoveries from addiction; and

Enforcement: implementing criminal justice reforms that give law enforcement the necessary tools to disrupt the supply of heroin and stop the diversion of opiate prescription

medications within the state.

The report is just the latest step taken by the Senate Majority Coalition to meet the heroin crisis head on -- seeking legislative solutions and securing necessary funding. Since 2011, laws have been adopted to establish Good Samaritan protections, further expand access to naloxone, create I-STOP, and enhance insurance coverage among others.

In March 2014, the bipartisan New York State Senate Joint Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Addiction was created to examine the alarming rise in use of heroin and opioids that has claimed lives and hurt families across New York State. Following forums held throughout New York State, Task Force members, led by Chair Senator Phil Boyle and Co-Chairs Senator Mike Nozzolio and Senator David Carlucci, secured the enactment of 11 bills signed into law by Governor Cuomo and \$2.25 million in substance abuse funding.

Building on this success, Senators Ortt, Amedore, and Murphy were named as the Task Force Co-Chairs early last year and joined with Task Force members to hold forums in Westchester, Monroe, Niagara, Albany, Otsego, Yates, Kings, Suffolk, and Broome counties. They brought together medical experts, treatment providers, law enforcement, and affected New Yorkers who provided invaluable insights and anecdotal evidence, affording the members the opportunity to understand how legislation could better address this public health crisis

