



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas D. Croci

New York State Senate Joint Task Force On Heroin And Opioid Addiction Releases Final Report

THOMAS D. CROCI May 18, 2016

| ISSUE: **HEROIN AND OPIOID ADDICTION, THE EPIDEMIC OF HEROIN ABUSE**



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PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

Albany, NY – Senator Thomas Croci (R, C, I – Sayville), member of the Senate Joint Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Addiction, announced today the task force has released its findings and recommendations of its new report tackling the state’s deadly heroin and opioid addiction crisis.

The report summarizes the input received from medical experts, treatment providers, law enforcement and affected New Yorkers who participated in numerous forums held throughout the state over the past year, including on Long Island, and highlights the legislative recommendations to help address the issues that were raised across the state.

Senator Croci said, "It is a crisis that requires action, not words. We are experiencing a true epidemic of heroin and opioid abuse and overdose deaths. It is an equal opportunity killer in every community and we are taking action to save lives and protect families."

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 Task Force incorporated the four essential prongs and collaborated with stakeholders in communities across the state as part of its strategy to develop the report's legislative and budgetary recommendations. These recommendations create an effective, multi-faceted, and comprehensive approach to addressing many of the issues raised by the state's opioid crisis.

The Task Force is recommending the following legislative actions for the Senate to consider during the 2016 legislative session and for state agencies to assist in implementing:

Prevention:

- Limiting initial prescriptions of controlled substances (S6091B, Hannon)
- Creating a Prescription Pain Medication Awareness Program (S4348A, Hannon)
- Enhancing patient access to abuse-deterrent technology for opioids (S6962A, Hannon)

- Ensuring proper opioid education to prescribed patients (S7315, Murphy, Amedore, Ortt);
- Establishing a Narcan kit registry (S6516A, Amedore);
- Providing instruction of mental health, alcohol, drug and tobacco use in junior and senior high schools (S5546A, Funke);
- Requiring patient counseling prior to issuing a prescription for a schedule II opioid (S7365, Akshar);
- Increasing availability of naloxone (S6346A, Carlucci); and
- Requiring the state Department of Health (DOH) and the state Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) to examine and report on the underreported and at-risk populations, including but not limited to Native American Tribes and the effect the heroin and opioid crisis is having on those populations.

Treatment:

- Continuing education for credentialed alcoholism and substance abuse counselors (S7301, Amedore, Murphy, Ortt);
- Removing barriers to Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) (S7317A, Murphy, Amedore, Ortt);
- Examining insurance coverage for medications approved by the FDA for use in MAT of opioid addiction and examine the accessibility across the state to new treatment modalities;
- Enhancing emergency intervention procedures (S6248B, Ortt);
- Establishing assisted outpatient treatment for substance use disorders (S631, Carlucci);

- Requiring the DOH and OASAS to examine and report on the most effective treatment modalities, including ideal settings, treatment length, and best practices for heroin and opioid addiction;
- Creating and appointing an Ombudsman to assist individuals and families in obtaining appropriate insurance coverage for treatment services;
- Requiring all OASAS-certified treatment providers to inform individuals receiving treatment and their families of their right to file an external appeal with the Department of Financial Services (DFS) and provide them with the means necessary to access such appeal; and
- Requiring DOH and DFS to rigorously scrutinize the implementation of any conditions placed on accessing treatment.

Recovery:

- Including for-profit providers in the Request for Proposals Process for substance use disorder and gambling programs (S7446, Amedore);
- Creating a Sober Living Task Force (S3989A, Croci);
- Expanding treatment options for judicial diversion participants (S6874, Murphy);
- Expanding access to judicial diversion programs (S6322A, Ranzenhofer);
- Encouraging employment of recovering users (S2346, Seward);
- Enacting the Wraparound Services Demonstration Program (S7748A, Carlucci); and

- Requiring DOH and OASAS to examine and report on vital statistics related to heroin and opioid addiction, including relapse rate, length of treatment, and what, if any, follow up care supports are in place upon discharge.

Enforcement:

- Enhancing penalties for the sale of controlled substances on park grounds and playgrounds (S994, Golden) - this bill passed the Senate on March 1, 2016;
- Facilitating the conviction of drug dealers (S100, Boyle);
- Expanding the crime of operating as a major trafficker (S4177, Murphy);
- Creating Drug-Free Zones around drug or alcohol treatment centers and methadone clinics (S7200, Akshar);
- Establishing appropriate penalties as it relates to heroin sales (S7012, Ortt);
- Enhancing judicial access to juvenile records for determining judicial diversion program eligibility (S6317, DeFrancisco);
- Adding fentanyl to the controlled substance schedule (S6632A, Croci);
- Establishing Xylazine as a controlled substance (S7397, Murphy);
- Creating the crime of homicide by sale of an opioid controlled substance (S4163, Amedore);
and
- Developing a formula to disperse funds acquired from the seizure of assets used in the commission of drug crimes.

The report highlighted this year's state budget commitment of \$166 million for heroin and opioid crisis, treatment, outpatient, and residential services. Due to advocacy by the Senate's Task Force members, the budget included an increase of \$25 million above the Executive Budget's original proposal.

The report recommends that this additional \$25 million would support: Family Support Navigator and Navigator training programs; On-Call Peer programs; Adolescent Clubhouses to provide safe and welcoming spaces for teens; Recovery Community and Outreach Centers; Recovery Coach peer mentoring programs; a "Combat Heroin" Public Service Campaign; Opioid Overdose Prevention program; Opioid Medication Treatment program; Transitional Housing Opportunities; Local Government Unit Block Grants; School Resource Officer Training programs; and a Wraparound Services Demonstration Program.

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.

"No more families should have to experience the heart-wrenching loss of their loved one due to a heroin overdose. I have listened to these stories first-hand throughout the state from mothers, fathers, siblings – this addiction crisis is literally stealing life from every corner of this state and I will continue to work with my colleagues, the public and all stakeholders to combat the scourge of opioids and heroin in our communities," stated Senator Croci.

The full report with detailed findings and recommendations can be found at:

https://www.nysenate.gov/sites/default/files/articles/attachments/htf_report_final2.pdf

All media inquiries should be directed to Senator Croci's Communications Specialist, Christine Geed at (631) 398-8044 (call or text) or via email at geed@nysenate.gov. Inquiries for additional information should be directed to Senator Croci's Press Secretary, Jennifer Romero at (631) 513-5657 or via email at jromero@nysenate.gov

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RELATED LEGISLATION

2015-S6632A

- Introduced

- - In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate

- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate

- - Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate

- Delivered to Governor

- Signed By Governor

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Designates certain substances as schedule I opiates controlled substances

February 01, 2016

In Assembly Committee

Sponsored by **Thomas D. Croci**

Do you support this bill?