



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Todd Kaminsky

## Kaminsky Votes For Package To Combat Opioid and Substance Abuse Crisis

SENATOR KAMINSKY May 17, 2016

| ISSUE: **COMBATING HEROIN AND OPIOID ADDICTION**

**(Albany, New York)** -- Today, Senator Todd Kaminsky voted for, and the Senate passed, a package of legislation aimed at combating heroin and opioid addiction in New York. Recognizing that more must be done, the legislation takes a four-pronged approach to combating the opioid epidemic by addressing prevention, treatment, recovery, and enforcement.

Included in the package of legislation are bills intended to limit prescriptions of controlled substances, increase education training for health care professionals who prescribe controlled substances, and require the Commissioner of the Department of Health to report data on all opioid overdoses - both fatal and non fatal - on a county basis.

“For far too many months, Long Islanders have watched as the heroin and opioid epidemic has swallowed the lives of our loved ones” said Senator Kaminsky. This crisis knows no bounds and abuse is indiscriminately affecting Long Islanders of all stripes and in all communities. “With this legislation, we affirm that we can do more and must do more, at all levels, to combat the substance abuse that is ravaging our families, communities and loved ones.”

"I fully support Senator Todd Kaminsky on passing these bills," said Steven Dodge, Founder and CEO of the S.L.A.T.E Project. "I believe in order to combat this opioid epidemic it MUST be tackled from all angles – education, prevention, awareness, treatment, law enforcement, and community support. Having a senator who understands addiction and the needs of the individual is an important aspect and piece of the puzzle. To know that I have the support from my government representative to help me fight this epidemic makes me believe that what I do is all worth it and that there is a chance for change."

This legislation clears hurdles that some face when seeking treatment by prohibiting managed care providers from requiring authorization for buprenorphine, a drug commonly used in the treatment of opioid addiction. Further, it establishes a process in which court-ordered assisted outpatient treatment can be obtained by a loved one for an individual battling substance abuse.

In addition to limiting prescriptions of controlled substances, the package creates a Class A-1 homicide felony for drug dealers who sell opiates to someone who dies as a result, and establishes an 'intent to sell' heroin if an individual is in possession of 50 or more packages, or more than \$300. The law tightens the definition on operating as a 'major trafficker' by reducing the threshold for the sale of a controlled substance from \$75,000 to \$25,000, and also designates xylazine, a drug used by some dealers to enhance the heroin's potency, as a Schedule II controlled substance.

In the Assembly, Senator Kaminsky's advocacy was instrumental in securing \$653 million in this year's state budget for enhanced treatment and recovery programs throughout the State.