



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pamela Helming

## Senator Helming Hosts Heroin and Opioid Crisis Roundtable Discussion

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SENECA FALLS – Citing the need to combat the heroin and opioid crisis in our communities, Senator Pam Helming recently hosted a roundtable discussion titled “Addressing the Heroin & Opioid Addiction Crisis” at Generations Bank in Seneca Falls. The event brought together 20 people with a variety of perspectives on the epidemic, including law enforcement, emergency services, medicine, public health, treatment and prevention, public education, and parent advocacy.

With Senator Helming moderating, the group discussed how to stop the addiction crisis and focused on prevention, education, treatment, and giving law enforcement the tools they need. As a member of the New York State Senate Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Addiction, Senator Helming has made putting an end to this epidemic among her main legislative priorities.

“Sadly, we all know someone who has been impacted by this devastating crisis that affects every demographic group regardless of age, gender, race, or socioeconomic status, and not one week passes where we don’t hear of another drug-related overdose or death. While there are no easy answers or quick fixes to solving this epidemic, I felt it was important to bring together various stakeholders who represent different fields of expertise so that we could all collaborate to offer the best prevention, treatment, recovery, and education services. The questions and recommendations raised during the discussion serve as a starting point to finding solutions that support our families and communities who need our help the most,” Senator Helming said.

During the roundtable discussion, Senator Helming and the attendees responded to questions that the attendees had submitted prior to the meeting. The questions included such topics as the impact of the addiction crisis on police, fire, and EMS departments, the role of schools and families in preventing addiction and supporting recovery, the factors standing in the way of treatment, the effect of education and prevention, and how community partners can work together to raise greater awareness.

After the discussion, Senator Helming asked each attendee to offer one suggestion that she should take back to Albany to discuss with her colleagues and develop legislation during next year’s session. The recommendations included such items as expanded insurance coverage for recovery services, continued support for prevention and education efforts, funding for mentorship and sponsorship programs, training for EMS personnel in

prevention and recovery efforts, funding for integrated substance abuse and mental health services, and incentives for continued collaboration among community partners.

“Among the many positives to come out of this roundtable discussion was the opportunity for people across a variety of backgrounds to put faces to the names of their colleagues who work to put an end to the heroin and opioid addiction crisis through different avenues. The connections that were made at this meeting will continue outside of it as our local partners find ways to collaborate and look for solutions to this problem that is plaguing our families and communities. I look forward to hosting a full Senate Task Force public hearing in our region next year to continue this important conversation,” Senator Helming said.

*Senator Helming represents the 54<sup>th</sup> Senate District, which consists of Seneca and Wayne Counties, parts of Cayuga and Ontario Counties, and the towns of Lansing and Webster. For more information, please visit Senator Helming's [website](#), or follow @SenatorHelming on Facebook or Twitter.*

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