



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Terrence Murphy

Senator Murphy backs record investment to combat heroin epidemic

TERRENCE MURPHY March 13, 2018

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Albany, NY - An estimated 63,600 Americans lost their lives to a drug overdose in 2016, more than any year on record. By comparison, more than 58,000 US soldiers died in the entire Vietnam War, and nearly 55,000 Americans died in car crashes at the peak of such deaths in 1972. To stem the rising tide of heroin and opioid abuse, the New York State Senate Majority has unveiled a record \$265 million proposal to fund health and safety initiatives that would reduce the harmful effects of drug abuse for individuals and families.

As former co-Chair and an ongoing member of the Senate's Joint Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Addiction, Senator Terrence Murphy has traveled throughout the State, hosting community-based forums. He has seen the devastating effects of drug dependence firsthand, having talked with former addicts who overdosed on opioids. He has listened to heart-wrenching accounts of parents who lost their children to addiction and heard their cries asking for solutions.

"Addiction is a disease that tears communities and families apart. One person may use, but the whole family suffers. We will continue to lose more of our friends and loved ones unless more aggressive actions are taken," said Senator Murphy. "The Heroin Task Force is at the forefront of advancing ground-breaking legislation that will provide concrete solutions for those who are battling addiction. That is why I am working to enact a comprehensive plan that will address the heroin and opioid epidemic."

Senator Kemp Hannon said, "The opioid epidemic continues to have a devastating effect for all communities in New York, which is why we have been working for several years to reform prescribing practices, educate prescribers, and ensure people have access to treatment. The Senate's opioid package invests more money, continues to build on our accomplishments and makes additional investments in prevention, treatment, and recovery. I commend my Senate colleagues who lead the Task Force and their continued efforts to combat this crisis."

"This record \$265 million in funding reinforces the Senate Majority's commitment to eradicating the heroin and opioid abuse epidemic in New York State," said Senator Chris Jacobs. "Based on what we learned in hearings all across the state, these resources are very strategically targeted where they will have the greatest impact in this fight - prevention, treatment and recovery, and giving law enforcement the necessary tools to stem the flow of illegal substances."

Senator George Amedore said, "With a record level of funding and measures to increase prevention and improve access to treatment and recovery services, the Senate continues to lead the way in addressing the addiction issues that plague every community throughout the state. The Task Force held a series of productive meetings throughout the state that helped us to identify where gaps remain in the system and what steps we should be taking next. This package builds on the investment and policies that have been enacted in order to continue to help and support those who are struggling with addiction."

"From my 15 years in law enforcement and traveling the state with my fellow Heroin and Opioid Addiction Task Force Co-chairs, it's clear that the only way we can be successful in this fight against addiction is by taking a multi-faceted approach that incorporates prevention, education, treatment, recovery and enforcement," said Senator Fred Akshar. "The measures included in the Senate's budget proposal reflect our bottom-up approach, where we met with stakeholders at the ground level to identify needs and produce tangible results. I urge our colleagues in the Assembly and the Executive Branch to join us in these measures, because the heroin and opioid addiction scourge is bigger than any partisan or political differences. It takes all of us working together to provide relief and hope for families struggling with addiction in communities across our great state."

The Senate's Joint Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Addiction, led by Co-chairs Jacobs, Amedore, and Akshar, has been holding forums throughout the state, most recently in Binghamton, Pleasantville, and Hudson. These events, legislative budget hearings, and ongoing outreach by Senator Hannon as Health Committee Chair have provided the opportunity to solicit input from stakeholders involved in the ongoing epidemic. Health care providers, law enforcement, educators, and family members helped the Senate formulate additional steps that need to be taken.

The Senate proposal increases the state's support for opioid use disorder-related services to a new record of \$265 million - going beyond the 2018-19 Executive Budget proposal of \$228 million.

In addition, the Senate will propose measures to reduce exposure to opioids for children and adults; limit and provide alternatives to opioid use; better define controlled substances to include deadly drugs like fentanyl; screen expectant mothers to prevent and treat addiction in infants; encourage the successful recovery for those struggling with addiction; and provide law enforcement with new tools to help get drugs and dealers off the streets.