



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Robert G. Ortt

Jacobs, Ortt, WNY Senators Announce Heroin & Opioid Funding

ROBERT G. ORTT April 9, 2018

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



(Buffalo, NY) – Senators Chris Jacobs, Rob Ortt and the Western New York delegation to the New York State Senate announced a major funding commitment to a regional service provider on the front lines of the battle against heroin and opioid addiction. Save the Michaels of the World Inc. will be receiving \$425,000 in the recently approved state budget to support their efforts to reduce drug overdoses and addiction across Western New York. The funding is part of a record level \$247 million secured in the budget by the Senate to support education, prevention, treatment and recovery services across the state.

“The Senate’s Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Addiction is committed to ensuring healthcare professionals, service providers and law enforcement have the tools they need to improve outcomes for individuals and families afflicted by addiction,” said **Senator Chris Jacobs**, a Co-Chair of the Task Force. “We know that everyone must work together to stem the tide of this deadly epidemic, and Save the Michaels of the World is a very deserving partner that will make great use of these resources.”

“The record funding obtained in this year’s budget demonstrates the commitment my colleagues and I have to helping the families of our state struggling with addiction,” said **Senator Robert Ortt**. “As a co-chair of the New York Joint Senate Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Addiction, I heard countless personal stories about the struggles and difficulties this epidemic has placed on our friends, our family, and our community. It’s crucial that the Legislature continues to support local governments and successful advocate organizations such as ‘Save the Michaels’ if we are to rid our state of this epidemic.”

Save the Michaels provides individuals who are addicted wrap-around care during and after treatment and recovery, and offers a nurturing and supportive environment to families throughout the process. As the organization expands its reach and services, it intends to use the funding to hire full-time recovery coaches and provide placement support to drug courts in seven Western New York counties. Public education, family member training and recovery support activities will also be enhanced with the funding.

“As a father that lost a son to this epidemic, I take great comfort knowing that every time the phone rings at our office that the caller will get the help they need,” said **Avi Israel, President and founder of Save the Michaels of the World**. “I want to thank our Western New York Senators for their leadership in delivering this funding that will help us provide assistance to every caller in Western New York.”

The \$247 million level of support is a \$37 million increase over last year's heroin and opioid funding. The Task Force advocated for the increase after a series of public hearings with stakeholders across the state. Additional spending highlights include \$10.6 million to support more residential treatment beds and \$3.8 million for the development and implementation of substance use disorder treatment in local jails.

"As a former State Trooper and Sheriff of Erie County, I have seen first-hand the devastating impact that drugs can have on individuals and their families, said Task Force member **Senator Patrick Gallivan**. "The opioid crisis is unlike anything I have ever seen and must be addressed through prevention, treatment and law enforcement. Organizations like Save the Michaels will help individuals in our community overcome the dangers these drugs pose."

"The heroin and opioid crisis has had a devastating impact on communities all across Western New York, leaving a trail of heartbroken families and individuals in its wake," said Task Force member **Senator Mike Ranzenhofer**. "My colleagues and I in the Senate have and continue to work to provide funding for the crucial organizations, such as Save the Michaels of the World, that are working to break this cycle of addiction."

"It is rare to find a Western New Yorker who has not been impacted by the opioid epidemic, yet we cannot be discouraged," said Finance Committee member **Senator Tim Kennedy**. "New York has once again stepped up to support the critical treatment and prevention programs, as well as the incredible support organizations like Save the Michaels, who go above and beyond for families whose loved ones find themselves dependent on these drugs. If we can save just one life, and prevent one parent from the heartbreak of losing a child, then these efforts will have been worth it."

In addition to record funding, the budget that was passed also codifies into law language that makes permanent a new peer-to-peer engagement program for recovering addicts that

was sponsored by Senator Jacobs. It also prohibits prior authorization for outpatient substance abuse treatment to ensure people get the help they need immediately.

To help increase the tools available for law enforcement to get dangerous drugs off the street, two new derivatives of fentanyl and several new hallucinogenic drugs were added to the state's controlled substances schedule.

“Our efforts in the Senate to end this public health crisis are bi-partisan and ongoing, and the funding and program initiatives we have secured are an important next step in this fight,” said Jacobs. “By supporting organizations like Save the Michaels of the World, we are offering hope and proven methods of treatment and recovery for individuals and families from all walks of life who have been affected by this tragic disease.”

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