



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pete Harckham

## Lawmakers Tackle Opioid Epidemic in the Hudson Valley with Roundtable and Hearing

PETE HARCKHAM October 4, 2019

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The Joint Senate Task Force on Opioids, Addiction & Overdose Prevention are holding a roundtable and hearing today in the Hudson Valley at the Putnam County Training and Operations Center in Carmel. The hearing/roundtable is one of seven being held around the state.

The Task Force's mission is to carry out a holistic review of New York's overdose crisis and the State's approach to drug use, with a focus on saving lives and improving individual and community health. The Task Force will hear from experts on addiction and recovery and carry out a review of best practices to identify gaps in the current system and to develop short- and long-term legislative and budgetary solutions.

**Senator Pete Harckham, Chair of the Senate Alcohol and Substance Abuse Committee** said, "Over the past two months, we have seen and heard how opioid substance use disorders have devastated the lives of families and communities around the state. Today, we have assembled two panels of people on the front lines of the epidemic - mental health professionals, treatment experts as well as family and patient advocates from around the Hudson Valley, to better understand how to save lives through improved state programs, better allocation of funds and new legislation."

**Senator David Carlucci, Chair of the Senate Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Committee** said, "No county in the Hudson Valley has been immune to the opioid epidemic. It's a life or death situation that has our attention, and at this roundtable and hearing we are going straight to the experts on the front lines of addiction and treatment to determine where our current efforts are falling short. No family should lose another loved one to an opioid overdose."

"The opioid crisis has devastated too many New York families. I am proud that we are holding both a roundtable and a public hearing in the Hudson Valley region to learn more about the challenges in this community," **said State Senator Gustavo Rivera, Chairman of the Senate Health Committee.** "This continues the effort of the Joint Task Force to travel across New York to hear from different stakeholders to find bold, efficient solutions to help us overcome this public health crisis."

Since 2015, opioid related deaths have steadily increased in Dutchess and Orange Counties, while in Westchester, Rockland and Putnam Counties, deaths have slightly declined, according to data from the New York State Department of Health.

Carlucci, Harckham, and Rivera have already passed legislation in the Senate to protect good Samaritans who administer Naloxone, expand insurance coverage of treatment medications, better protect patients' rights, and establish a recovery living task force.

The Hudson Valley roundtable is being held 10AM to 12PM today. The hearing will follow from 1PM to 5PM.