



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Fred Akshar

Senator Fred Akshar Authors Legislation to Dedicate Opioid Settlement Funds to Treatment and Recovery Services

FRED AKSHAR May 3, 2021

| ISSUE: **OPIOID SETTLEMENT FUNDS, COMBATING HEROIN AND OPIOID ADDICTION**



Senator Fred Akshar introduced legislation ([S.6479](#)) this week to ensure that any future opioid settlement funds collected by New York State be put into a “lockbox” dedicated to improve and expand treatment and recovery services for New Yorkers struggling with addiction.

Akshar’s legislation follows the recently passed state budget, negotiated between Governor

Cuomo and legislative Democrats, that funneled opioid settlement funds into the general fund instead of creating a dedicated “lockbox” that could be used to enhance and increase investment in much needed prevention, treatment, and recovery services for New Yorkers who are struggling with addiction.

Earlier this year, New York State Attorney General Letitia James, along with a coalition of AGs from 47 states, announced a \$573 million settlement agreement with McKinsey & Company for their role in the ongoing opioid epidemic. New York State will receive more than \$32 million from the agreement.

Upon the announcement of the award, advocates and lawmakers urged the money – and all future opioid settlement funds – be put in a “lockbox” for the sole purpose of expanding and improving prevention, treatment, recovery and support services for those struggling with addiction or in recovery. Senate Democrats hailed a proposal they included in their one-house proposal to do so – but instead, voted in favor of the enacted budget that failed to create a dedicated “lockbox” for the settlement funds.

Akshar’s legislation creates a Dedicated Opioid Settlement Fund specifically to protect future funding windfalls related to opioid and addiction settlements and ensure the funding is used solely for expanding and improving prevention, treatment recovery and support services, rather than covering spending shortfalls elsewhere in the New York State Budget.

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“The Governor should not be allowed to use the opioid settlement funding to pay for his out-of-control budget,” said Senator Fred Akshar former co-chair of the Senate Task Force on

Heroin and Opioid Addiction. “Addiction is an insidious disease that is claiming too many lives in every single corner of this great state. It impacts New Yorkers of every race and income level. Every penny of the \$32 million settlement should go toward addiction services and anything less is a failure of the state's moral obligation to invest in and protect some of its most vulnerable citizens. I’m calling on my colleagues from both sides of the aisle to work together to make sure this funding goes for its intended purpose: Fighting the heroin and opioid crisis through treatment, prevention, education, recovery and enforcement.”

RELATED LEGISLATION

2021-S6479

- Introduced

- - In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate

- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate

- - Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate

- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
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Implements statewide opioid settlement agreements and creates an opioid settlement fund

April 30, 2021

In Senate Committee [Mental Health](#)

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Do you support this bill?