



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michelle Hinchey

## Senator Michelle Hinchey Fights for Bill to Prevent Opioid Overdose Deaths on College Campuses

MICHELLE HINCHEY August 31, 2021

| ISSUE: **INTERNATIONAL OVERDOSE AWARENESS DAY, OPIOID CRISIS, NARCAN, SUNY, CUNY**



**ALBANY, NY** – On International Overdose Awareness Day, Senator Michelle Hinchey (SD-46), who represents communities with some of the highest rates of opioid overdose deaths in New York State, called for the state legislature to prioritize her bill to prevent fatal overdoses on SUNY and CUNY campuses in the 2022 legislative session. The legislation ([S.3448](#)) requires institutions in the State and City University system to train resident assistants (RAs), who live in student residence halls, in the administration of opioid antagonists, like Naloxone (Narcan), and maintain an on-site supply of opioid antagonists in college-owned and

operated student housing. The Senator's bill passed the State Senate unanimously in the 2021 session but never made it to the floor of the Assembly for a vote.

“One of the most devastating aspects of the opioid crisis is that many on-campus overdose deaths could be prevented if Narcan was more widely available,” **said Senator Michelle Hinchey**. “When a person has overdosed, there is an extremely limited window of time to get them the help they need, which is why having a reliable supply of Narcan in college dorms, along with trained RAs to administer it, is critical. This legislation reinforces our efforts to reduce the number of opioid-related deaths in our communities and protect a group that is among the highest risk — college students. Getting this bill passed and signed into law is an incredibly important step in combating the opioid crisis and among my top priorities for the 2022 legislative session.”

**SUNY Chancellor Jim Malatras said**, “Across the nation, we still lose too many people to opioid misuse, including students, and we must do everything we can to stem the tide. While our heroic university police department has trained officers to administer naloxone, getting this life-saving drug in the hands of trained resident assistants will increase our ability to help students in need. SUNY quickly supported the legislation to prepare our RAs to help in such cases of emergency, and we thank Senator Michelle Hinchey for raising this as a priority safety measure for higher education. We will work with Senator Hinchey to make sure this becomes law.”

**Abigail Evans, student at the University at Albany, said**, “Resident assistants have an enormous capacity to help in times of crisis. Their unique access and personal relationships with peers make them a formidable defense against overdose fatalities, and ensuring that they are trained to respond to these emergencies would be transformative to on-campus safety. I hope the state legislature will take this chance to protect students by passing Senator

Hinchey's bill.”

**Bryce A. Mack, student and Resident Assistant at SUNY New Paltz, said,** “As an RA and a member of the Nassau County Heroin Prevention Task Force, I strongly believe we need to do everything possible to protect our youth. Preparing them for overdose incidents is a benefit for everyone. New York, unfortunately, has many cases of opioid overdoses, so ensuring that our students and staff are safe 24/7 should be a priority.”

According to a recent [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) report](#), drug overdose deaths surged nationally by nearly 30% (more than 93,000 deaths) in 2020, a record that reflected the biggest overall increase in U.S. history. Federal officials attributed nearly three-quarters of the fatal overdoses to opioids. The rise is due in large part to the growing prevalence of fentanyl — a powerful synthetic opioid, 25–50 times more powerful than heroin and 50–100 times stronger than morphine — and the stress from COVID-19 job loss, isolation, and the overall state of unrest. Over the past two decades, the use of opiates by college students has risen dramatically, resulting in increased accidental overdoses.

In an effort to educate residents of the 46th Senate District on the safe and proper use of Narcan to treat opioid overdoses, Hinchey and her team have held four trainings with plans for several more in the coming months. Community organizations, businesses, and first responders who would like to partner with Senator Hinchey's office to deliver a Narcan training in their community are encouraged to call 845-331-3810 or email [hinchey@nysenate.gov](mailto:hinchey@nysenate.gov).

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January 29, 2021

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Sponsored by [Michelle Hinchey](#)

Do you support this bill?