



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James Sanders Jr.

## Senator Sanders' Overdose Prevention Bill Signed into Law by Governor

JAMES SANDERS JR. October 7, 2021



Senator James Sanders Jr. is proud to announce that Governor Kathy Hochul today signed his opioid prevention bill into law.

Bill S911/A2354 promotes the use of opioid antagonists to combat and prevent drug-related overdoses.

"Opioid addiction is a scourge on our society--causing great pain and suffering on those

addicted, their families and friends," **Sanders said**. "Deaths from opioid overdoses nationwide was nearly 50,000 in 2019, according to the CDC. This legislation will lead to less opioid deaths by encouraging people to use medicine that can save lives since using such medicine will not be used as evidence against them in a court of law."

Opioid antagonists, such as naloxone, have been in existence since the 1960s and have helped in preventing numerous heroin and opiate over-dose-related deaths in emergency situations. Recent legislation and actions by law enforcement and chemical dependence prevention and treatment providers have increased the availability of naloxone to those with addiction to heroin and opiates.

At hearings and roundtable discussions held by the Assembly, chemical dependence prevention and treatment providers, physicians, drug policy experts, and law enforcement all cited the importance of the availability of opioid antagonists in preventing overdose-related deaths.

Although medical treatment is required after an opioid antagonist is administered, its use and possession should not be discouraged amongst those who need it most. By prohibiting the possession of opioid antagonists as evidence in court of possession of controlled substances, this bill would help to encourage people to obtain and possess opioid antagonists and continue to save lives.

"Opioid antagonists such as naloxone (Narcan) are a vital tool in the fight against the overdose deaths which have devastated New York's communities during the pandemic and for decades longer," said **Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz**, who introduced the companion bill in the Assembly. "Experts, such as drug treatment providers, physicians, law enforcement, and others all believe in the importance of having opioid antagonists available to prevent

overdose-related deaths. Thank you to Governor Hochul for signing this important bill into law, State Senator Sanders for his partnership in carrying this legislation, and all of our colleagues who have been working hard to end the opioid epidemic. I am very proud that now people who may be in the best position to reverse an overdose do not have to avoid carrying Narcan out of fear of legal consequences."