

The Connecticut General Assembly



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Rep. Ritter Applauds Passage of Groundbreaking Opioid Legislation

House passes bill to combat opioid crisis

Public Health Committee House Chair Matt Ritter (D-Hartford) praised passage of legislation that will help to address the state's opioid crisis. HB 5053, An Act Increasing Access To Overdose Reversal Drugs, passed the House of Representatives today by 144-0.

The legislation will improve access to Naloxone, often known as Narcan, a medication that is used to treat opioid overdose; cap first-time painkiller prescriptions to a 7-day supply for both minors and adults except in limited circumstances; strengthen the prescription monitoring program; release health care professionals and good Samaritans from liability when they administer an opioid antagonist, such as Narcan, to treat an overdose; and add more on-the-ground experts, including an emergency medical technician and a licensed alcohol and drug counselor, to the Connecticut Alcohol and Drug Policy Council.

"I'm proud that Connecticut is leading the way in combatting opioid addiction and overdose," **Rep. Ritter** said. "This bipartisan legislation acts on two fronts by making it easier for those currently struggling with opioid addiction to access Narcan and preventing new cases of addiction by capping first-time painkiller prescriptions. We have a responsibility to all those who have lost a loved one to this deadly addiction to address Connecticut's opioid epidemic, and today we took an important step forward."

The 7-day cap on painkillers applies to first-time adult prescriptions and all prescriptions for minors, with exceptions for certain medical conditions. The bill requires that local emergency medical services are equipped with and trained in the use of Narcan. It also allows doctors to write prescriptions for the overdose reversal drug without first getting permission from a patient's health insurer.

“This landmark legislation represents a significant step forward in our fight against heroin and opioid addiction,” said **Rep. Sean Scanlon** (D-Guilford). “By becoming just the second state in the nation to cap non-chronic pain prescriptions, we will dramatically reduce the excess supply of pain pills that flood our society and are the reason four in five new heroin users begin their deadly addiction. There is no silver bullet solution to this crisis, but with this legislation I'm confident we are making substantial progress that will prevent future addictions from beginning and help Connecticut communities and families currently affected by this epidemic.”

“Heroin and prescription drug overdoses are claiming more lives in Connecticut every year,” **Rep. Theresa Conroy** (D-Seymour), an APRN, said. “Expanding access to Narcan is an important step in this public health crisis. Allowing more first responders to carry Narcan will save lives.”

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