

The Connecticut General Assembly



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SCANLON PRAISES HOUSE PASSAGE OF PRESCRIPTION ABUSE BILL

State Rep. Sean Scanlon (D-Guilford, Branford) applauded the House of Representatives for approving legislation he co-sponsored and has championed since January that would help prevent prescription- drug abuse and opioid overdoses.

“There is a prescription drug abuse epidemic happening in every city and town in this state and this bill is a step in the right direction towards combating that,” said Scanlon. “For the first time in history, more people are dying from overdoses than car accidents and I’m thankful that Governor Malloy and my colleagues agree it’s time for us to wake up and do something about this growing problem.”

House Bill 6856, An Act Concerning Substance Abuse and Opioid Overdose Prevention, now goes to the Senate for consideration. Scanlon first learned of the depth of the problem after meeting with students and parents from the Guilford D.A.Y. Coalition last December shortly after being elected.

“These students and parents opened my eyes to the problem and I decided, especially since I serve on the Public Health committee, to learn as much as I could about this issue and try and do something about it,” said Scanlon.

Scanlon co-sponsored HB 6856 with Rep. Theresa Conroy (D-Seymour) and he helped pass the bill unanimously in both the Public Health Committee and the full House of Representatives, a remarkable achievement for a freshman legislator.

“I’m proud that the first bill I helped pass as a legislator came out a meeting with students and parents in my district,” Scanlon said Monday. “The problem is wider than just Guilford, however, and has become a public health crisis that requires aggressive action by the state, and this legislation addresses the epidemic head-on.”

Between 2009 and 2014, there were over 2,000 accidental and unintentional opioid involved deaths that occurred in 150 of Connecticut’s 169 cities and towns. Nationwide,

18- to 24-year-olds are more likely to die from drug overdoses, primarily from prescription pain relievers, than from motor vehicle accidents.

The legislation:

- Requires practitioners, before prescribing greater than a 72-hour supply of any controlled substance, to check the patient's record in the prescription drug monitoring program
- Requires practitioners to review the patient's record at least every 90 days if prescribing for prolonged treatment
- Requires pharmacists, starting in July 2016, to immediately report to the monitoring program on prescriptions they fill, rather than at least weekly, and requires the reporting to be done electronically
- Makes other changes to the prescription drug monitoring program, including exempting opioid agonists in certain situations
- Requires physicians, advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs), dentists and physician assistants to take continuing education in prescribing controlled substances and pain management