

STATE REPRESENTATIVE
**Roberta B.
WILLIS**



Dear Friends,

In recent news, incidents of people suffering from heroin overdose and addiction to pain killers has taken front stage. Many view the epidemic as a health crisis and I agree. For many, opioids are a gateway drug to heroin. Studies show that 3 out of 4 heroin users started with opiate abuse. We must not take the situation lightly. This is why I am reaching out to inform you of my efforts to discourage and help end opioid abuse.

Please feel free to contact me with any suggestions or concerns you may have regarding state government. Together, we can make a difference.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Roberta".

SERVING THE 64TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT
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OPIOIDS – A HEALTH CRISIS

While we need efforts to increase access to drug treatment programs and to prevent drug overdoses, we must also do more to prevent people from becoming addicted to opioids and heroin in the first place. Education is key to prevention.

As a goal, on a state and federal level, we need to consider mental health and substance abuse treatments as we do other chronic and acute illnesses. The goal is to make appropriate treatment options accessible and affordable.

Based on recommendations from Connecticut substance abuse advocates and professionals, the following are bills I am sponsoring this year:

- An Act Concerning Opioid Analgesic Prescriptions Issued To Minors – to require doctors to obtain consent before prescribing opiates to a child, and to ensure that children and their parents are educated on the risks associated with opioids. Among adolescents, the prescribing rates for prescription opioids have more than doubled in the past ten years.
- An Act Increasing Access To Overdose Reversal Drugs – to require municipalities to ensure that the primary emergency response provider, on the scene of an emergency call, is equipped with and prepared to administer the overdose reversing drug Naloxone (brand name Narcan), and has been appropriately trained to do so.
- An Act Concerning Insurance Coverage for Abuse-Deterrent Opioid Analgesics – to require insurance coverage for pain killers that will deter and reduce opioid abuse.

The Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) announced a new toll-free number connecting residents seeking treatment and services for an opioid addiction to local walk-in assessment centers. Residents will now be able to call **1-800-563-4086**, 24 hours a day, to connect them or a loved one to a walk-in assessment center in their area.



For more information, please contact:

**McCall Center for Behavioral Health
860-496-2100**

**Behavioral Health Center at
Charlotte Hungerford Hospital
860-496-6350**

**Housatonic Youth Service Bureau
Northwest Corner Prevention Network
860-824-4720**

**Housatonic Valley Coalition Against
Substance Abuse
203-743-7741**

**Western CT Mental Health Network Torrington Area
860-482-1560**