

STATE REPRESENTATIVE
RAGHIB ALLIE-BRENNAN

Dear Neighbor,

I am reaching out to update you on our efforts to combat the opioid epidemic in Connecticut. Opioid addiction and overdose deaths continue to plague our state and communities across Connecticut have suffered tragic losses of life. Our legislative efforts continue to target overdose deaths and help those struggling with addiction. By increasing education and prevention efforts and expanding available treatment options we can save lives. This mailer contains more information on these laws and resources that can help individuals struggling with addiction and their families. Please share them if you know a family member or friend in need of help.

Sincerely,



P.S. One of the best ways to stay up-to-date is by signing up for my e-blasts.

Sign up online at

www.housedems.ct.gov/Allie-Brennan
to get my legislative updates!

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE
RAGHIB ALLIE-BRENNAN
THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC



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EPIDEMIC

Prescription opioids, such as oxycodone (OxyContin®), hydrocodone (Vicodin®), codeine, morphine, and many others, can be used to help relieve moderate-to-severe pain. They are often prescribed after surgery or injury, or for certain health conditions. These medications can be an important part of treatment but also come with serious risks such as addiction and overdose, especially with long-term use. There are also a number of side effects with prescription opioids, even when taken as directed.

Drug misuse occurs when someone uses a medicine beyond how it is prescribed, usually to get high, or relieve anxiety or distress.

- On average, roughly three people in Connecticut die from drug overdoses every day - 1,017 total in 2018 alone.
- More people die in Connecticut from drug overdoses than in car accidents or gun violence.
- These include deaths from heroin, fentanyl, morphine and oxycodone, which includes brand name pills such as OxyContin, Percocet, Vicodin and Demerol.

In order to combat this trend, in 2018 we passed lifesaving legislation to address the opioid crisis here in Connecticut. We have some of the most comprehensive laws in the nation to prevent and treat opioid abuse, including increasing accessibility to anti-overdose drugs such as Naloxone; providing immunity for people who seek emergency medical assistance and/or administer anti-overdose drugs to someone having an overdose; establishing a statewide prescription drug monitoring program; and limiting the initial amount of opioids that can be prescribed in the first place. Connecticut now limits a prescriber to a 7 day or less supply for adults and a 5 day or less supply for minors under the age of 18. In 2017, we passed legislation requiring certain individual and group health insurance policies to cover medically necessary detoxification.

We have also established a working group to evaluate ways to combat the opioid epidemic in Connecticut. They are investigating how many patients annually receive methadone treatment, the rate at which they relapse and the number of people who die from overdoses while participating in these programs. They report their findings and make recommendations to the Legislature's Public Health Committee.

I am proud to have cosponsored a bill the House of Representatives passed this session, HB 5524, An Act Increasing the Penalties for the Sale of Fentanyl. The bill amends the definition of narcotic substances to classify fentanyl and fentanyl derivatives as a narcotic, thus, increasing the penalty for possession and related crimes.

According to the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, in nearly two-thirds of 2017's overdose deaths, some trace of fentanyl was found in the victim's system. Currently, fentanyl is the leading cause of drug-overdose fatalities, making it our priority to take immediate legislative action.

Education is vital in fighting this epidemic. We have held more than 20 opioid forums throughout the state to educate families to understand: this is not a problem for other people. This is happening in all neighborhoods and communities, regardless of socio-economic status. In fact, some fatalities are from wealthy areas whose children were injured playing sports and prescribed just enough opioid pain reliever to create an addiction.

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- If you are prescribed opioids for pain, help prevent misuse and abuse by never selling or sharing prescription.
- Never use another person's prescription opioids. Keep prescription opioids in a secure place and out of reach of others.

SAFELY DISPOSE OF UNUSED PRESCRIPTION OPIOIDS:

Find your community drug take-back program
Your pharmacy mail-back program
or visit www.drugfreect.org for more info.

Visit www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose
Learn about the risks of opioid abuse and overdose

Always talk to your doctor before making a
decision to stop or change your medication.

Avoid alcohol while taking opioids,
and contact the 24/7 Access Line at 1-800-563-4086
if you think you may be struggling with addiction.