



New Hampshire State Senate **NEWS RELEASE**

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Senate introduces Rx Drug Health and Safety Program

SB 286 seeks to curb controlled drug "doctor shopping"; reduce high rate of Rx overdose deaths in NH

CONCORD – Concerned by the reality that more people die each year in New Hampshire from prescription drug overdoses than car accidents, lawmakers and community stakeholders introduced legislation today designed to create a system to track controlled drugs, reduce the incidents of doctor shopping and prevent deadly drug overdoses.

At a news conference in Concord, prime sponsor Sen. Jeb Bradley, R-Wolfeboro, offered his support for SB 286 saying, "This legislation will stop doctor shopping and misuse of prescription drugs but won't stop our friends and neighbors who legitimately need access to pain medication. We have bi-partisan support for SB 286 both in the Senate and the House. It is not an overreach. We believe in personal liberty here in New Hampshire but we cannot shirk our responsibility as lawmakers to help combat a serious problem."

Members of the medical and law enforcement communities also came out in strong support of the legislation. Dr. Seddon Savage of Dartmouth Medical School, and a nationally-known expert on addiction, stressed finding a way to help those patients who truly need prescription pain medication while, at the same time, blocking their misuse by others as well as the associated harms that follow.

"This bill will help us detect both patients and prescribers who may be diverting drugs for profit and it will allow us to accumulate data to better understand risk factors associated with prescription drug abuse and to develop strategies to better address the challenges. SB286 promises to begin to use technology to help us find the critical balance we need in using controlled substances safely for their legitimate roles in healing," she said.

Chief Richard Crate of Enfield, also with the NH Association of Chiefs of Police, put the issue in perspective for law enforcement saying, "The greatest threat to New Hampshire's way of life is misuse of prescription drugs. Moms, dads, sons and daughters are all struck by this epidemic. Their addictions lead to robberies, burglaries and other crimes. SB 286 is a tool for doctors and pharmacists to better treat patients and keep us safe. This legislation is not law enforcement driven. It is a public safety issue."

The Governor's Commission on Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Prevention, Intervention and Treatment was also represented at the event. Chairman Tym Rourke welcomed the opportunity to give his whole-hearted support for SB 286 and shared the findings of his organization's newly released report, *Prescription Drug Abuse: A Call to Action*. The year-long effort involved hundreds of stakeholders from communities across the state that have seen first-hand the devastating impact of prescription drug abuse on New Hampshire communities.

Rourke said, "While no single intervention can alone address the complex and challenging issue of prescription drug abuse, a prescription monitoring program (PMP) is a critical element of an overall strategy. As a state with more prescription drug-related deaths annually than traffic fatalities, with our substance use treatment system challenged by a growing increase in those seeking treatment for opiod addiction, it is time that citizen, public and private partners move to address this epidemic with a PMP as an available tool in the arsenal."

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