



New Hampshire Senate

News Release

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Senators unveil plan to combat substance abuse epidemic in New Hampshire

Concord, NH - Today, legislative leaders announced a multi-faceted approach to tackle the substance abuse epidemic affecting communities statewide.

Senate President Chuck Morse (R-Salem), Senate Majority Leader Jeb Bradley (R-Wolfeboro), Senator David Boutin (R-Hooksett) and Senator Andy Sanborn (R-Bedford), explained their specific legislative proposals aimed to curb the substance abuse epidemic by focusing on different aspects of the substance abuse problem. The Senators will introduce five bills, including a proposal for Drug Courts, stronger penalties on fentanyl, enhancing drug monitoring, long-term treatment programs for opioid addiction, and supporting law enforcement efforts to eliminate drug dealers from our streets.

"We continue to be concerned about the unprecedented substance abuse epidemic in New Hampshire and we all know families and friends that are affected by this. We are prepared to lead the way in combating substance abuse by sponsoring a number of bills as part of a multi-faceted plan that will address various aspects of this complex and widespread problem," said Senate President Chuck Morse (R-Salem).

"The legislation discussed today will be swiftly and properly vetted in public hearings, allowing for necessary public and stakeholder input so that the legislature produces the best solutions possible to break the substance abuse cycle. I am confident that the legislature will come together on these bills so we can take clear and strategic action to reduce the burden of the substance abuse epidemic in our communities," said Senate Majority Leader Jeb Bradley (R-Wolfeboro).

"I'm working on legislation with Governor Hassan to that establishes the same criminal penalties for unauthorized distribution or use fentanyl that currently exist for heroin," added Bradley.

"Senator Jeanie Forrester is working to broaden a successful interdiction program to all corners of the state that has been tested between State Police and Manchester Police Department and proven effective. This kind of crackdown on crime sends a signal that New Hampshire will not tolerate or allow this type of drug activity and we are serious about combating this drug epidemic from all sides," said Bradley.

"The legislation I've introduced would help coordinate resources for County drug courts that would create a long-term approach with structure and accountability to help treat addicts and change criminal behavior. The results are aimed at reducing recidivism in our legal system while also returning individuals to participate in every day society," said Senator David Boutin (R-Hooksett). "Drug courts have been proven to be effective in increasing public safety within our communities and I look forward to working in a bi-partisan effort to bring them to New Hampshire."

“There is no question that opioid addiction in New Hampshire has become the most significant issue facing New Hampshire today. With nearly 300 million prescription pills being disbursed annually in a state of 1.3 million people, this clearly indicated that our prescribing protocols need review,” said Senator Andy Sanborn (R-Bedford), chair of the Health and Human Services Committee.

“The legislation I’m proposing would approach the many complex issues at hand beginning with closing down the fire-hose of creating new addicts, updating prescribing protocol and identifying those who need help, to finding the best path to adequately address it without just using incarceration policies indiscriminately. We must then find a way to include long term recovery support to insure this cure is sustainable,” said Senator Sanborn.

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