



New Hampshire General Court

Chuck Morse
President of the Senate

Shawn Jasper
Speaker of the House

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House, Senate leadership insist on transparent, inclusive deliberative process to address substance abuse legislation

Concord, NH – Senate President Chuck Morse (R-Salem) and House Speaker Shawn Jasper (R-Hudson) issued the following statement:

“We understand the severity of the heroin and opioid crisis that has taken hold in the State of New Hampshire. Responding to the crisis is a top priority which we planned to examine in an expedited fashion when the next legislative session begins in January. As we know, addiction is not a stand-alone issue and our response will take a multi-faceted approach to address addiction and recovery, including mental health, law enforcement, education and prevention.”

“Despite the progress we’ve made by increasing substance abuse funding by 75% in the budget, which the Governor vetoed, we will continue to work to address the substance abuse epidemic, but we will insist on a proper, open and deliberative process.”

“The old wise saying that we should measure twice and cut once is how we will consider any legislation that addresses substance abuse. We will ensure legislation follows a fully transparent and open process, involving necessary input from all stakeholders in public hearings.”

Senate Majority Leader Jeb Bradley (R-Wolfeboro) and House Majority Whip Richard Hinch (R-Merrimack) added, “It is essential that in any session involving issues as serious as the drug epidemic, we are deliberative and take the appropriate steps to properly vet all proposals and courses of action affecting the state of New Hampshire. House and Senate members hear from constituents and local leaders on a daily basis related to how the substance abuse crisis is affecting their communities and we know that a process void of their input will produce ineffective results.”

“A prime example of an ineffective process, void of public or stakeholder input, is the Governor’s ill-advised attempt to circumvent normal procedure by filing emergency rules with the Board of Medicine, which if approved, could result in dangerous unintended consequences. The Emergency prescribing rules established by the Governor restricts patients’ ability to access the medicine they need to combat pain. This closed, insider process hurts New Hampshire citizens.”

“We will not and cannot allow that to happen now, or in 2016. It is vitally important that we not create a crisis while trying to solve a crisis.”

Background:

The bills proposed by legislative leadership will bolster the state’s response to the substance abuse crisis by addressing the following areas:

- Expanding drug courts throughout the state
- Improving access to long term recovery services
- Increasing penalties for fentanyl
- Strengthening the state’s efforts in prevention and interdiction
- Updating prescriber practices

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