



New Hampshire General Court

Chuck Morse
President of the Senate

Shawn Jasper
Speaker of the House

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Senate, House announce plan to address substance abuse epidemic

Parameters to be established during special session on Nov. 18

Concord, NH – Today, Legislative leadership laid out their plan to combat the substance abuse epidemic as part of the Special Session on Nov. 18.

During the Special Session, the House will introduce a Special Session House Concurrent Resolution which, if passed, will go into effect immediately to establish a joint Substance Abuse Task Force.

The Task Force will be made up of 26 House and Senate members representing a wide range of committees and will fully vet and debate a specific set of issues including:

- Updating penalties for fentanyl distribution to be consistent with penalties for heroin
- Requiring insurance companies to adhere to same substance abuse treatment evaluation criteria; removing prior authorization requirements
- Updating prescription drug monitoring program technology, increase statewide usage
- Expanding Drug Courts
- Increasing law enforcement prevention and interdiction measures
- Increasing prescriber educational standards

A final report will be presented on January 6, 2016 which will serve as the basis for filing legislation.

“During the Special Session, we will introduce a Substance Abuse Task Force that will be charged with carefully addressing each of the major issues surrounding the heroin and opioid epidemic. We look forward to working with both our House and Senate colleagues in a way that allows us to lead on addressing these issues, while also ensuring that we appropriately review them to best serve the State of New Hampshire,” said Senate President Chuck Morse (R-Salem).

“This Task Force will allow us the time to work on these bills appropriately but in an expedited manner to combat this crisis. It will allow legislative action to be taken in an open and transparent process in order to vet all proposals. House and Senate members have continuously heard from local leaders related to how this crisis is affecting their communities. We know that a process without their input could result in less effective results and create more problems. We believe this is the most effective way to come up with a solution which benefits the citizens of New Hampshire,” said House Speaker Shawn Jasper.

“The joint Substance Abuse Task Force will provide the foundation for the Legislature to take an effective approach to curbing the substance abuse epidemic by allowing a comprehensive, inclusive, and transparent deliberative process. House and Senate members will properly vet and debate proposals, listen to input from experts and community members, while ensuring that by seeking a solution to one crisis, we are not inadvertently creating another crisis,” said Senate Majority Leader Jeb Bradley (R-Wolfeboro).

“We believe this Task Force is the best approach to coming up with a comprehensive set of solutions. These are complex issues with huge consequences,” said House Majority Leader Richard Hinch (R-Merrimack). “By assembling this group of legislators who are experts in their respective policy areas, and putting together a process by which they work with external stakeholders, we believe we have a better chance of not just having good legislation, but having the best legislation we can, given what we know at this time. This is an evolving issue that the legislature is prepared to deal with throughout the coming months. This Task Force will be on the front lines of the legislative process, and their work will help our state respond in a swift, but measured manner.

ATTACHED: Unofficial draft of the Special Session House Concurrent Resolution

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