



New Hampshire Senate

News Release

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Senate enables Task Force on New Hampshire's opioid, heroin epidemic

Legislature expects action on bills in January

Concord, NH – Today, the Senate adopted a resolution creating a joint Task Force on the heroin and opioid epidemic in New Hampshire.

The Task Force is made up of 26 legislators who will meet over the next few weeks as a whole and in smaller sub-groups to quickly and thoroughly review proposed substance abuse initiatives. Legislation recommend by the Task Force is expected to be taken up in January.

They are expected to address issues including:

- The current criminal penalties for the possession and distribution of fentanyl;
- Requiring insurance companies to use the same evaluation criteria for substance abuse treatment and removing prior authorization requirements;
- Mandating greater use of the state's prescription drug monitoring program and upgrading its technology;
- Continuing medical education relating to prescribing schedule II, III and IV drugs;
- Providing a statewide drug court grant program
- Expanding the reach of State Police's new mobile enforcement teams.

Senate President Chuck Morse (R-Salem) and Senate Majority Leader Jeb Bradley (R-Wolfeboro) issued statements following the vote.

"We are committed to combating the war on heroin in our State and the Task Force created today provides a venue for legislators to address these issues in a thoughtful and expedited manner," said Senate President Chuck Morse (R-Salem).

"We are all aware of the severity of this issue and recognize the serious effect these deadly drugs are having on our families, friends, neighbors and colleagues in every community in New Hampshire. The Joint Task Force will allow for deliberate, yet quick action to be taken on substance abuse issues so that everyone involved including, law enforcement, the courts, treatment centers, and the medical community will receive the tools they need to aggressively combat the epidemic burdening our state."

"We've heard the public outcry for action on the tragic substance abuse crisis in our state. Today's vote by the legislature will allow us to act promptly in addressing a number of issues that will help curb the devastating crisis touching each of our communities," said Senator Jeb Bradley (R-Wolfeboro).

“Legislative leaders from the House and Senate serving on the Task Force will meet next Tuesday, Nov. 24 at 9 a.m. to continue the process of vetting proposals in a thorough yet expeditious manner. Following the Task Force’s recommendations, we will fast-track finalized legislation so it can be taken up quickly in the public hearing process. We aim to place a number of these bills on the Governor’s desk by the end of January.”

Attached: *Senate appointees to the Task Force on the heroin and opioid epidemic in NH*

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