



New Hampshire Senate

News Release

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Governor's opioid prescription restrictions largely rejected by NH Board of Medicine

Rejection serves as warning for special session

Concord, NH – Today, the New Hampshire Board of Medicine voted to largely reject the Governor's emergency rules which would have restricted the ability of physicians to prescribe opioid pain medication.

Senator Majority Leader Jeb Bradley (R-Wolfeboro) and Senator John Reagan (R-Deerfield), who is vice-chair of the Joint Legislative Committee of Administrative Rules, released the following statements:

"Governor Hassan tried to mandate a new set of rules on how doctors prescribe opioid pain medications but did not consult with either the New Hampshire Medical Society or her own Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention, Treatment and Recovery. It's imperative that doctors be involved in developing guidelines so patients who need these medications can receive them, and at the same time, work together to reduce opioid abuse," said Senate Majority Leader Jeb Bradley (R-Wolfeboro). "We are all concerned with the substance abuse crisis, but we don't want to use one crisis to create another."

"Governor Hassan did not schedule public hearings. As a result, more than 100 emails were submitted by medical professionals outlining their concerns and warning against unintended consequences. This secretive process without a public hearing is unacceptable. Doctors, not elected officials, are the experts in determining how medications should be prescribed. Physician's voices needed to be heard if there are going to be thoughtful and effective regulations and if we are going to combat the substance abuse problem," said Bradley.

"The flawed process of the prescribing rules should serve as a warning for the Special Session. Legislation should only be considered for a vote that is well thought out, has received appropriate stakeholder input through public hearings and addresses the heroin crisis in a coordinated and effective manner. Anything less than a comprehensive hearing and input process in a special session could produce a similar result as the prescribing rules," added Bradley.

"Physicians must adhere to common standards and best practices or they will be faced with severe consequences. I share in the concerns voiced by the New Hampshire Medical Society with respect to the Governor's new mandates. Governor Hassan went beyond her jurisdiction in mandating new rules related to how physicians and surgeons prescribe opioid medications. As the Vice Chair of the Joint Legislative Committee on Administrative Rules, I am disappointed by the establishment of these rules in general because they do not follow the conventional criteria for emergency rule making," said Senator John Reagan (R-Deerfield).

"The New Hampshire Medical Society has indicated that the untested rules could lead to a litany of additional and even more severe medical issues and even increase opioid addiction. Any new rules related to patient care and prescribing methods need to go through the standard process focused on public input from medical providers ensuring that the rules will provide the best results possible," said Reagan.

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