



New Hampshire Senate

News Release

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Forrester, Sanborn seek accountability from State Substance Abuse Director "Drug Czar" needs to improve communications with local officials

Concord, NH - Senate Finance Chair Jeanie Forrester (R-Meredith) and Health And Human Services Chair Senator Andy Sanborn (R-Bedford) reiterated their concerns related to the Senior Behavioral Health Coordinator John Wozmak's effectiveness in addressing ways to combat the heroin and opioid epidemic prior to the Joint Fiscal Committee's vote to accept additional grant money for the position.

"New Hampshire is facing a heroin and opioid epidemic statewide and we need effective leadership and adequate resources to develop a coordinated, statewide response. I stand by my call for the so-called "Drug Czar" John Wozmak to resign from the Substance Abuse and Behavioral Health position in the office of the Governor due to his failure to quickly act in response to this crisis since he was appointed to this role more than six months ago," said Senator Andy Sanborn (R-Bedford).

"During today's Fiscal committee meeting, Wozmack admitted it would be another 200 days before he will present his next formal response to the substance abuse issue. He also stated that he has been absent from the planning, design and implementation of several substance abuse initiatives that came in front of fiscal today, totaling over \$7 million, which reaffirms his ineffectiveness in the position," Sanborn added.

"New Hampshire families and communities are in need of a swift, multi-faceted response to this drug crisis and because of the Governor's veto of the legislative budget for FY 16-17, additional funding and resources have been put on hold," Sanborn said.

"While the Fiscal Committee agreed to allow the position to continue, the most pressing issue at hand is the fact that a 75% increase in funding for drug and alcohol treatment and prevention efforts is not being deployed to combat the substance abuse issues facing our state as a result of the Governor's veto," said Senator Jeanie Forrester.

"Late Tuesday, we received a handful of letters in support of this position. It surprises me that I have yet to hear from the Governor pledging her support for this position. I'm taking a leap of faith by choosing to support this funding based on conversations I've had with other high level individuals engaged in

combating the substance abuse problem facing our state and whom I have the highest respect,” added Forrester.

“Overriding the Governor’s veto on September 16th remains the surest way to inject program support for substance abuse and to adopt a conservative, compassionate, and balanced budget that serves the needs of the State of New Hampshire, and makes our state more competitive while living within our means,” said Forrester.

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