



New Hampshire Senate

## News Release

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## **Senate Finance passes three early bills on substance abuse**

*Law enforcement grant program, PDMP tech upgrades and Drug Courts to be voted on by Senate Thursday*

Concord, NH –The Senate Finance Committee passed three early bills Tuesday on the response to the heroin and opioid crisis, including bills to increase interdiction measures, funding for system upgrades to the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program and establishing a Drug Court grant program. These bills, supported by the Joint Task Force, will go to the Senate floor for a full vote on Thursday.

“There is clear evidence that targeted police presence aimed at drug trafficking has taken numerous dealers off of the streets, effectively reducing the supply of deadly heroin and fentanyl in our communities. I am encouraged to see this bill, SB 485, unanimously approved by Senate Finance, which establishes a program to provide grants to local communities to be used for increased interdiction measures. By providing the resources for this program that we know is successful, we can increase our local police forces’ ability to remove drugs from our streets, effectively curbing the cycle of substance abuse,” said Senator Jeanie Forrester (R-Meredith), Senate Finance Chair and prime sponsor of SB 485-FN-A.

“Senate Finance also voted in support of a bill, SB 522, funding upgrades to the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program [PDMP] in order to expand its usage by medical providers and pharmacists. The PDMP system serves to reduce the practice of doctor shopping or seeking opioid pain medication from multiple prescribers. It will also serve to lessen instances of overprescribing which may lead to addiction and the abuse of heroin and other illegal and deadly substances,” said Senator Jeb Bradley (R-Wolfeboro), prime sponsor of SB 522-FN-A.

“We first proposed a state-wide County Drug Court grant program back in October, and through conversations with all of the stakeholders and extensive work by the Joint Task Force, this bill has been thoroughly vetted and was approved, with an amendment, by the Senate Finance committee. This is a critical step forward in establishing this evidence based, recovery program in the State of New Hampshire,” said Senator David Boutin (R-Hooksett), sponsor of SB 464-FN-A.

“Drug courts offer a holistic approach to combating the heroin and opioid crisis by providing treatment and recovery services for addicts with a history of incarceration in order to restore healthy behaviors for the long term. The amendment to this legislation also includes measures to allow for an alternative drug offender program in counties, suitable for lower risk drug offenders. I am grateful for the support we’ve seen on this legislation and look forward to voting on this bill on the Senate floor this week,” said Boutin.

“The amendment to the drug court legislation also requires that for every dollar spent outside of the budget on these programs, one be saved to the Revenue Stabilization Fund, totaling \$5 million, in order to be better prepared for future economic downturns,” added Forrester.

“I am proud of the swift work done by the Senate Finance Committee in passing these early bills from the Joint Task Force today, and I am confident that these bills will find support on the Senate floor this week,” Bradley continued.

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