

In Case You Missed It: "New Jersey is now on the right path to combat opiate addiction" - Elaine Pozzycki, Chair of the Partnership for a Drug-Free New Jersey

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New Jersey has the tools to curb opiate epidemic

Elaine Pozzycki is chair of the Partnership for a Drug-Free New Jersey.

The Record

New Jersey is now on the right path to combat opiate addiction. A recently adopted comprehensive law incorporates most of the major common-sense measures that Partnership for a Drug Free New Jersey, addiction experts and impact families have long advocated. Taken together, these measures give New Jersey among the strongest – if not the strongest – set of opiate prevention laws of any state in the nation.

This new law takes on the opiate epidemic at the source: the over-prescribing of opiate based painkillers. It limits initial prescriptions to five pills and mandates all prescribers receive ongoing training in current best-prescribing practices as a condition of being allowed to prescribe opiate based painkillers. The new law also requires a conversation between all patients and their doctor before an opiate is prescribed about the risks of addiction and potential alternatives. This requirement for a conversation before an opiate is prescribed expands to all patients the provisions of a recently adopted law targeted specifically at the parents of children and teenagers.

We applaud state Sen. Joe Vitale, D-Middlesex, the co-sponsors of this legislation and Governor Christie for this major step forward, but this is no time to rest on our laurels. Now that we have built a solid foundation, the hard work of implementation and stepped-up education must begin.

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A ground-breaking pilot program, Alternatives to Opiates (ALTO) underway at St Joseph's Regional Medical Center's emergency room show us what is possible when medical providers become an active part of the solution. This successful program demonstrates that most patients can be given effective pain relief without the use of opiates. So far, three-out-of-every four patients needing treatment to reduce pain were successfully treated by alternative medications and therapy, forgoing the use of highly addictive opiate-based painkillers

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We now have the tools to curb this epidemic. Let's get to work putting them to use.

Full press release [HERE](#)

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