



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

**TESTIMONY PRESENTED BEFORE THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE  
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**House Bill – Bill 5063 – An Act Concerning Treatment for Drug Overdose**

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The Department of Public Health supports House Bill No. 5063, An Act Concerning Treatment for Drug Overdose.

Drug overdose rates have never been higher. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, overdose deaths were second only to motor vehicle crash deaths among leading causes of unintentional injury deaths in the United States (2007). In Connecticut, the 2007 age-adjusted drug overdose death rate in Connecticut was 11.1 per 100,000.

Two of the most common drug categories attributed to overdose deaths are heroin and prescription drugs called opioid painkillers that include oxycodone and hydrocodone. The increase in drug overdose death rates is largely because of prescription opioid painkillers which account for more overdoses than heroin and cocaine combined.

Naloxone is standard treatment for preventing an opioid overdose. According to a 2009 study published by the American Medical Association, the peers or family members of overdose victims are most often the actual first responders to a drug overdose, and are best positioned to intervene quickly at the onset of overdose symptoms. Data cited in the study demonstrate that lay persons are consistently successful in safely administering naloxone and reversing opioid overdose.

This bill clarifies that people other than drug users can be prescribed naloxone to prevent drug overdose deaths. For example, a health care professional could prescribe naloxone to a family member of a drug user to administer in the event of an overdose. Access to naloxone in this instance may increase the likelihood of survival for the person who overdosed.

The DPH is committed to improving health outcomes of Connecticut residents and therefore supports this bill.

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