

March 8, 2014

Members of the Judiciary Committee
Connecticut Legislature
Hartford, CT

Dear Senator Coleman, Representative Fox and all members of the Judiciary Committee,

I am writing in support of HB 5487 **AN ACT PROVIDING IMMUNITY TO A PERSON WHO ADMINISTERS AN OPIOID ANTAGONIST TO ANOTHER PERSON EXPERIENCING AN OPIOID-RELATED DRUG OVERDOSE**. Thank you very much for your consideration of this important legislation.

I have lived and worked in New Haven, CT, since 2002. I am a social worker by training and manage HIV care and prevention studies at the Yale School of Public Health.

I am writing to you today as an advocate for the health of the people of Connecticut, and as a mother. I have two children: Edith, a 16 year old high school junior, and Javier, a 12 year old 6th grader. Like all young people, my children have tremendous potential to do anything. They may one day be elected officials like yourself, school teachers or police officers, investment bankers or artists. They may also one day be opioid addicts. While we do everything we can as parents to support our children and keep them from harm's way, addiction is a powerful force than can ensnare our children in spite of our best efforts. Peer pressure, back injury, experiences of trauma, curiosity and boredom are all pathways to opioid addiction.

When people use opioids – in the form of either heroin or oxycotin pills – they run the risk of overdose. They may accidentally take so much of the drug that their brain shuts down and they stop breathing. In that moment, an opioid antagonist – one simple shot - can bring the person back, stop the overdose from ending life.

I hope with all of my heart that the overdosing person lying on the floor of an apartment in Ansonia or behind a club in New Haven is never my child. To think of Javier's still body, turning blue and cold, sends shivers down my back. However, even if that person is not my child, s/he is somebody's child. Somebody's friend. Somebody's parent. And it is our responsibility as a State to do anything we can to save that person's life.

The bill before you will facilitate the administration of the opioid antagonists that are needed to reverse overdose in a moment in crisis. I urge you do whatever you can to ensure this bill passes.

Thank you very much,

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