

**Statement Before
Judiciary Committee
Wednesday, March 12, 2014**

**HB 5487 An Act Providing Immunity To A Person Who Administers An Opioid Antagonist To
Another Person Experiencing An Opioid-Related Drug Overdose**

Good Afternoon Senator Coleman, Representative Fox and members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Margherita Giuliano and I am both a pharmacist and the Executive Vice President of the Connecticut Pharmacists Association. The Connecticut Pharmacists Association is a professional organization representing 1,000 pharmacists in the state of Connecticut. I am here today to speak 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

This legislation provides immunity to licensed health care professionals and others who *administer* an opioid antagonist to a person they believe is having an opioid-related overdose. We would like to have pharmacists specifically mentioned in this legislation since a pharmacist is in the position to not only administer the medication but *dispenses* it as well.

As you know, there are a staggering number of opiate-related deaths in our country today. News reports of deaths due to heroin/fentanyl combination have dominated the airwaves in recent days. With easy access to heroin and opiate prescription medications it becomes critical that we remove barriers to the availability of naloxone for people at risk for overdose. Pharmacists are in a perfect position to be able to not only identify persons at risk, but to be able to provide the medication and the education to patients or caregivers as to how to administer the medication when needed.

As a front line health care provider it is important that pharmacists are immune from liability for damages in a civil action as well as in criminal prosecution for not only administering the medication but for dispensing it as well.

The CPA is currently working with advocates and with the Department of Consumer Protection to expand the availability of naloxone through protocol based dispensing or collaborative practice agreements. There are too many needless deaths. Through education we hope to inform the public of the availability of naloxone. With that are the unintentional burdens that come along with it. Do you give naloxone to a parent who suspects their child is addicted to heroin just to have on hand? Is it a violation of law if the person you dispense to is not necessarily the end user? How do pharmacies get reimbursed for this product?

Our neighboring state of Massachusetts has a law that has had a statistically significant impact on saving lives in their state. It says: Naloxone or other opioid antagonist may lawfully be prescribed and dispensed to a person at risk of experiencing an opiate-related overdose or a family member, friend or other person in a position to assist a person at risk of experiencing an opiate-related overdose. For purposes of this chapter any such prescription shall be regarded as being issued for a legitimate medical purpose in the usual course of professional practice.” And “A person acting in good faith may receive a naloxone prescription, possess naloxone and administer naloxone to an individual appearing to experience an opiate-related overdose.”

Passing legislation similar to Massachusetts is a solution to breaking down the barriers to naloxone availability so that we can move forward with a strong naloxone program in this state to save persons at risk.