



**FINANCE, REVENUE AND BONDING COMMITTEE  
MONDAY, APRIL 20, 2015**

**Testimony of Ingrid Gillespie, President of the Connecticut Prevention Network and Executive Director of Communities 4 Action**

Senator Fonfara and Representative Berger and members of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee, my name is Ingrid Gillespie, President of the Connecticut Prevention Network. I am offering testimony in support of :

**\*S.B. No. 1130 (RAISED) AN ACT IMPLEMENTING A TAX ON NARCOTIC SUBSTANCES AND CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES AND PROVIDING FUNDING FOR REGIONAL OPIOID ABUSE PREVENTION AND TREATMENT PROGRAMS**

The **Connecticut Prevention Network (CPN)** is an association of the state's 13 community partnership **Regional Action Councils (RACs)** that work to provide every community in the state with education, training, and advocacy for substance abuse prevention and related community concerns such as behavioral health, violence, gambling, drunk driving, prescription drugs and illicit opioid abuse and suicide. We are recognized as highly effective, community-based partnerships operating on average of a 1-2 paid staff team.

This bill recognizes the need to provide funding to address the crisis of opioid addiction in Connecticut. Consider:

- Between 2009 –2013, there were **over 1,900 accidental and unintentional opioid involved deaths** that occurred in 150 of Connecticut's 169 cities and towns. (Source:AIDS-CT Nalaxone (Narcan) Fact Sheet Feb 2015)
- Daily, there are local stories highlighting the traffic personal consequences of opioid addiction

Also consider the cost of substance abuse:

- According to CASA, there are 3 primary systems with heavy costs associated with substance abuse. They are the health care, judicial and educational systems. Nearly 1/3 of all hospital costs are linked to addiction and substance use. Eighty-five percent of all adult inmates and 78% of teens entering the juvenile justice system use substances. In the education system, substance use directly impacts academic performance and dropout rates
- *Connecticut spends 16.7% of its budget addressing the negative consequences of substance abuse and addiction.* The costs are primarily in health care, judicial and education systems (Source: CASA).

But prevention provides an excellent investment. Research has shown that “For every dollar invested in prevention, \$10 is saved in societal costs.” (Source: Community Prevention Initiative: Power of Prevention) This is an excellent Return on Investment (ROI)

This bill also supports the establishment of an account to provide grants-in-aid for regional opioid abuse prevention and treatment. Last spring DMHAS asked CPN members to convene 13 regional opioid work groups to identify local conditions and develop a regional action plan. These regional plans were developed but lack of funds have hampered these work groups from implementing them. However, this

bill can provide a much needed source of funds to implement these regional plans that reflect a cost effective multi-strategy approach to address this serious opioid abuse issue affecting so many individuals, families and communities.

Thank you and please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions.

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