



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES
A Healthcare Service Agency

Dannel P. Malloy
Governor

Patricia A. Rehmer, MSN
Commissioner

Memorandum:

TO: Senator Carlo Leone
Representative Baram
Members of the General Law Committee

FROM: Commissioner Patricia Rehmer, DMHAS

DATE: February 17, 2015

SUBJECT: **Written Testimony on Proposed H.B. No. 5782 An Act Allowing Pharmacists To Dispense Or Administer An Opioid Antagonist To Treat Or Prevent A Drug Overdose.**

Senator Doyle, Representative Baram, and distinguished members of the General Law Committee. Thank you for opportunity to submit written testimony in support of HB 5782. DMHAS supports all efforts to make Naloxone hydrochloride (commonly known as "Narcan"), and other opioid antagonists available to the general public in order to address the opioid overdose epidemic. A number of states are looking at expanding pharmacists' scope of practice to prescribe opioid antagonists, and the recently announced Governor's bill, which proposes to comprehensively address the opioid problem in CT, will contain similar language.

Opioid abuse is a growing public health concern. Fatal overdoses resulting from the use of opioids (heroin and prescription drugs) have been steadily increasing over the past few years. Narcan is a prescription medicine that reverses an opioid overdose. It cannot be used to get high and is not addictive. Research studies have found that making Narcan available does not encourage people to use opioids more. The goal of distributing naloxone and educating people about how to prevent, recognize, and intervene in overdoses is to prevent deaths. Expanding pharmacist's scope of practice to prescribe Narcan and other similar drugs will increase widespread availability of these lifesaving medications and address this epidemic by providing ease of access to a prescription that easily and safely reverses overdoses.

Thank you for consideration of this testimony. We respectfully request that you support the Governor's bill that will address the expansion of pharmacist scope of practice, as well as many other provisions to prevent substance abuse and opioid overdoses.