



CCM 2015 Testimony

900 CHAPEL STREET, 9th FLOOR, NEW HAVEN, CT 06510-2807 PHONE (203) 498-3000 FAX (203) 562-6314

Your source for local government management information www.ccm-ct.org

GENERAL LAW COMMITTEE

February 17, 2015

The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) is Connecticut's statewide association of towns and cities and the voice of local government - your partners in governing Connecticut. Our members represent over 95% of Connecticut's population. We appreciate the opportunity to testify on bills of interest to towns and cities.

HB 5782 "An Act Allowing Pharmacists to Dispense or Administer an Opioid Antagonist to Treat or Prevent a Drug Overdose"

CCM supports HB 5782 as it would allow a licensed pharmacist to dispense an opioid antagonist to be used as a life-saving measure against opioid overdoses.

Allowing pharmacists to dispense this type of medication for family, friends, partners and others that have loved ones that suffer from opioid drug abuse (heroin and certain prescription pain killers) will help reduce the number of untimely deaths in Connecticut. Currently, a physician's prescription is required to obtain Narcan (or other opioid antagonist).

During the summer and fall of 2014, CCM convened a working group comprised of municipal CEOs, health professionals, community health providers, educators and law enforcement officials to examine the drug abuse epidemic affecting our communities. The CCM working group met with various state agencies including Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, Department of Consumer Protection, Department of Public Health, and Department of Children and Families to discuss how the state and local efforts could enhance drug abuse prevention in the state. Based on the discussions from the experts, the working group agreed to advocate for pharmacists to be able to dispense Narcan to the public without a prescription.

This proposal is a natural progression from last year's Public Act 14-61, which provides civil and criminal immunity to anyone administering an opiate antagonist prescription drug such as Narcan. HB 5782 will therefore, make it easier for individuals to obtain Narcan.

As the Committee considers HB 5782 -- some of CCM's working group recommendations regarding properly implementing the proposal include determining whether pharmacists would need to enter into Collaborative Practice Agreements, and/or undergo training in order to dispense the medication. Some pharmacies in Rhode Island are able to do this, and their experience may serve as a guide on how Connecticut can implement this effectively.

Make no mistake, it is imperative to have strong prevention and education to combat drug abuse, but allowing greater access to opioid antagonist medications -- as a critical life-saving measure -- should be instituted to coincide with such a comprehensive approach to this alarming issue.

CCM urges the Committee to **favorably report HB 5782.**



If you have any questions, please contact Mike Muszynski, Senior Legislative Associate of CCM
at mmuszynski@ccm-ct.org or (203) 500-7556.