



**State of Connecticut**  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
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**REPRESENTATIVE MARY M. MUSHINSKY**  
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**RANKING MEMBER**  
PROGRAM REVIEW AND INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE

**MEMBER**  
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE  
FINANCE REVENUE AND BONDING COMMITTEE

Testimony of Rep. Mary Mushinsky (85<sup>th</sup>) in Support of PB 6279, An Act Concerning  
Prescription Drug Monitoring, Continuing Education and the Return of Unused  
Prescription Drugs

Before the Public Health Committee

March 4, 2015

Rep. Ritter, Sen. Gerratana, and PH Cmte members:

I support this bill as well as HB 6856, the Governor's bill on opioid abuse. Wallingford has experienced 53 deaths in 3 years due to opioids—a terrible and unacceptable number.

Opioid abuse starts with over-prescription of painkillers; the patient then switches to heroin, which is cheaper and easily obtainable. The town does not have a drop box for unwanted pharmaceuticals because the police department is opposed to hosting the site. Our pharmacies are allowed by recent federal regulations to accept unwanted pharmaceuticals, but no one has volunteered.

The only solution at the moment is to train citizens to add water to the drugs and then dispose of them in the trash for eventual burning. Opioid abuse is an immediate problem and we hope you will approve one of these bills.

Rep. Case spoke of his constituents' need to get their child high or intoxicated in order to obtain immediate care and admission to a facility for treatment of substance abuse. You should be aware Program Review and Investigations Committee looked at this issue and determined that state-offered health insurance plans found help for these adolescents but private plans did not, in violation of state and federal law which requires mental health parity. There is also a capacity problem: Connecticut needs more treatment beds.

The PRI Committee is considering another bill to track data on denials of behavioral health care (HB-6854) as well as monitoring Sec. 7 of HB 6847 (Governor's behavioral health bill) which also concerns access to behavioral health services. Please see the executive summary, highlights, and link to PRI's substance abuse treatment study.

References (read highlights for quick review):

Full PRI Report- Access to Substance Abuse Treatment-Phase I

[http://cgalites/pri/docs/2012/Final\\_Full\\_Approved\\_%20Access\\_%20to\\_%20SU\\_Treatment PH I.pdf](http://cgalites/pri/docs/2012/Final_Full_Approved_%20Access_%20to_%20SU_Treatment_PH_I.pdf)

highlights, Phase I:

[http://cgalites/pri/docs/2012/Final\\_Highlights\\_Access\\_to%20SU\\_Treatment.pdf.pdf](http://cgalites/pri/docs/2012/Final_Highlights_Access_to%20SU_Treatment.pdf.pdf)

Full PRI Report-Phase II

<http://cgalites/pri/docs/2012/Access%20to%20SU%20Treatment%20-%20Phase%20II%20-%202008.21.13.pdf>

highlights, Phase II

<http://cgalites/pri/docs/2012/Access%20to%20SU%20Treatment%20-%20Phase%20II%20-%20Highlights%20-%202008.19.13.pdf>

Attachments:

Comparison of bills regarding behavioral health services

Suggested strengthening language for HB 6847