

Lisa Tedesco, New London CT

WRITTEN TESTIMONY FOR HB6856:

My name is Lisa Tedesco. I am a licensed alcohol and drug counselor. I have been working in the field of Substance Abuse for 17 years. I have witnessed an dramatic increase in prescription opiate drug abuse and dependence. Oxycontin is known as the new "mothers little helper." Each year, more women and men's lives are becoming disabled by prescription opiates. As a result, their children's lives are affected as well. In the past 10 years I have been involved with DCF more than I ever have in the first 7 years of my career. The involvement with DCF means a child's life is affected by termination of parental rights, temporary guardianship, and permanent placement due to the death of a parent. Which brings me to the subject for the need of Naltrexone and or the intranasal Narcan. Making either more readily available to the public will, in my opinion, decrease the number of deaths from overdose and/or the lethal combination of CNS depressants. That being said, its not the answer, completely. Doctors, teachers, nurses, and law enforcement need more education with regard to substance abuse. I have had clients that show no signs of addiction become addicted due to a genetic predisposition or not once prescribed opiates for a condition that could be treated with differently. This is not to suggest that opiates be restricted completely but restricted to the hospital setting only where a patient can safely come off of the drug following surgery and be discharged with a different method of care for pain. I have been instrumental in having doctors prescribe Suboxone to their patients for opiate withdrawal and continue to advocate for patient and doctor awareness of prescription opiate abuse. While working in VT I had the opportunity to sit at roundtable discussions with doctors and providers of substance abuse treatment to talk about the growing problems of overdose, dependence, and diversion of prescription opiates. The results have repeatedly shown that its up to our legislators to pass bills that create laws regarding the dispensing of opiates. I encourage all of my clients to contact their legislator to be proactive about this problem.