

## Middlesex County Substance Abuse Action Council

A Council of the Business Industry Foundation of Middlesex County  
393 Main Street, Middletown, CT 06457 • (860)347-5959 • [www.mcsaac.org](http://www.mcsaac.org)

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Testimony of Betsey S. Chadwick, MCSAAC  
to the Committee on Finance, Revenue & Bonding

***Committee Bill No. 5: An Act Establishing a Surcharge on the Manufacture and  
Distribution of Opioids and Funding for Opioid Abuse Prevention and Treatment***

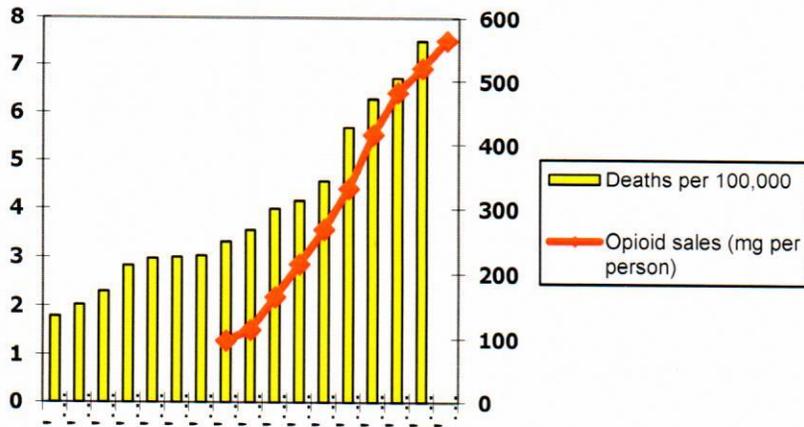
March 22, 2016

Senator Fonfara, Representative Berger, and Honorable Members of the Committee on Finance:

Thank you for an opportunity to express my support of Committee Bill No. 5, which would impose a surcharge of 6.35% on the manufacturers and wholesale distributors of controlled substances and direct those funds to the prevention and treatment of addiction.

I represent the Middlesex County Substance Abuse Action Council. We are one of the thirteen Regional Action Councils (RACs) established by the State of Connecticut. Our core mission is the prevention of addictive disease, especially among young people. Prevention and early intervention is the safest, sanest, most humane and fiscally prudent way to tackle the problem of addiction. The present opioid crisis is no exception. As many have said, we cannot arrest and treat our way out of it. Decreasing the *demand* for addictive medications is the best way to decrease the addiction and death rates. European counties have taken this approach; their opioid crisis began to lift in 2007 as demand began to drop. Our country can do the same.

Connecticut's foremost agency for opioid abuse prevention and treatment is DMHAS. Committee Bill 5, "*An Act Establishing a Surcharge*" would help DMHAS accomplish its mandate. Surcharge monies would be "deposited into the opioid abuse prevention and treatment account" which in turn would be distributed as grants-in-aid to regional organizations. This brings much-needed resources to families, right at the grassroots level. RACs advise Local Prevention Councils whose members represent schools, health clinics, churches, police departments, and other places where prevention activities and early intervention services take place. It is an effective, dollar-stretching means of providing services.



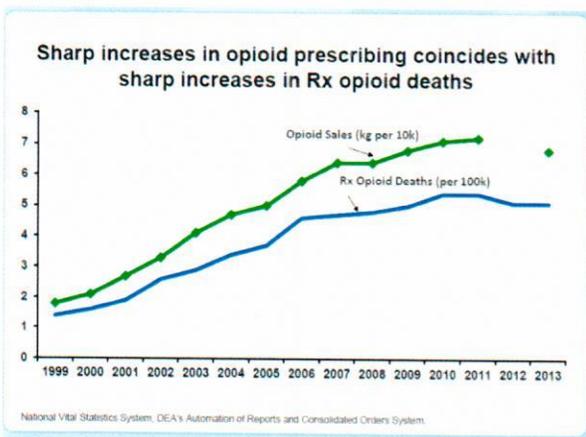
In a time of lean public funds, it makes sense that the private sector most profiting from opioid products should help pay for the negative impact of their misuse and abuse. The link between prescription sales and addiction is incontestable. In the chart to the left, the red line represents U.S. opioid sales from 1990 to 2005. The yellow bars

represent unintentional opioid deaths. There is a perfect correlation. The chart below demonstrates how opioid sales and deaths continued to climb until 2012 before leveling off. These are national figures; Connecticut is not so lucky. In 2015 we lost more citizens than ever to opioid-related overdoses.

We have seen twenty years of ever-increasing sales in our state. The chief of the Emergency Department at Middlesex Hospital, which serves my region, has seen a “steady climb in opioid ODs for nearly twenty years.” Committee Bill No. 5 will ensure that companies with a financial stake in increased opioid sales also have a stake in preventing their misuse and abuse. The efficient use of those surcharge dollars by DMHAS is a further reason to recommend the bill.

Please make every effort to see that Committee Bill No. 5 becomes law in the State of Connecticut.

Thank you.



Both charts are from the U.S. Center for Disease Control (CDC).