



**Testimony of Giovanna Pisani,
Director of Mid-Fairfield Substance Abuse Coalition, Program of Human Services Council
A member of Connecticut Prevention Network (CPN)**

**H.B. No. 5301 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING ANALGESIC PRESCRIPTIONS
ISSUED TO MINORS.**

March 3, 2016; Committee on Children

Senator Dante Bartolomeo and Representative Diana Urban, my name is Giovanna Pisani and I am the Director of Mid-Fairfield Substance Abuse Coalition at the Human Services Council in Norwalk, CT. I am writing today in support to require prescribing practitioners to obtain parental consent for opioid analgesic prescriptions issued to patients under the age of eighteen.

Opiates are a group of drugs that are used for treating pain. Many Connecticut residents are abusing these pain medications because they are a narcotic. The term opiates is sometimes used for close relatives of opium such as codeine, morphine and heroin, while the term opioids is used for the entire class of drugs including synthetic opiates such as Oxycontin. But the most commonly used term is opiates.

We are all human and sometimes in our life we have to take some type of narcotic for pain. Whether, it was for a broken bone, dental surgery or back pain. Opiates produce a sense of wellbeing or euphoria that can be addictive to some people. When used for pain relief, many people develop tolerance, meaning they need more and more to get the same effect. Some people go on to develop an addiction to opiates. They begin to obsessively think about getting more opiates and in some cases engage in illegal activities such as double doctoring, stealing, burglarizing and selling drugs.

According to the Connecticut Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME), which is still determining 2015 overdose numbers, there were 558 accidental drug overdoses in the state in 2014 — of those there were 325 “heroin-related” overdoses, a nearly 87 percent increase from 2012. “There’s no longer the prototypical heroin addict that you see on TV. They’re from all neighborhoods, all communities, affluent and poor. **If there has been a trend I would say that it’s that we’re seeing more kids using heroin. By kids, I mean people in their late teens or early 20s,**” said Norwalk Police Department (NPD) Lt. James Walsh, who heads up the department’s Special Services Division.

CPN has held more than 20+ community forums on opioid abuse and misuse. Roughly 3,000 adults and students learned about overdoses prevention, misuse and abuse of prescription medication and other opioids as well as signs and symptoms of addiction. CPN provided medical

grand rounds training on opioid addiction and use of brief screening tools and lastly, we partnered with CT Department of Consumer Protection and were able to advocate for 55 medication drop boxes in CT which collected 23,541 pounds of medication.

Parents need to be educated and aware that if they do accept the prescription for their child then they can be susceptible to a substance abuse problem.