



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES
A Healthcare Service Agency

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GOVERNOR

MIRIAM DELPHIN-RITTMON, PH.D.
COMMISSIONER

Testimony by Miriam Delphin-Rittmon
Commissioner
Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services
Before the Public Health Committee

Good Morning Senator Gerratana, Senator Somers, Representative Steinberg, and distinguished members of the Public Health Committee. I am Commissioner Miriam Delphin-Rittmon of the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS). Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on S.B. 511 AN ACT CONCERNING OPIOIDS.

SB 511 proposes DMHAS, in collaboration with the Chief Medical Examiner and the Insurance Commissioner, convene a working group to evaluate methods of combating the opioid epidemic in the state. Information related to number of the items the bill charges the workgroup with investigating are already readily available via staff expertise at DMHAS. DMHAS serves as the Single State Agency for Substance Abuse and as the State Opioid Treatment Authority as well as the co-chair of the Alcohol and Drug Policy Council (ADPC). The ADPC is mandated by C.G.S. 17a-667 to review policies and practices of state agencies and the Judicial Department concerning substance abuse treatment programs, substance abuse prevention services, as well as developing and coordinating a state-wide, interagency, integrated plan for such programs and services. If it is the Committee's will, DMHAS can work with the members of the ADPC and the ADPC's standing subcommittees to address information in this bill not already available rather than creating an additional workgroup.

SB 511 also proposes collection of data related to overdoses. The Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) Reportable Diseases Advisory Committee has recommended that drug and alcohol, including drug/opioid/heroin overdoses be included as "emergency illnesses and health conditions" as part of the list of "reportable diseases, emergency illnesses and health conditions," maintained in the Hospital Emergency Department Syndromic Surveillance System (HEDSS), to characterize hospital emergency department

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(ED) visit chief complaint data into syndromes of public health importance. This data is confidential and can only be used by DPH and local health directors for disease prevention and control and medical or scientific research. DMHAS supports the DPH Reportable Diseases Advisory Committee recommendation. The recommendation would provide the data this bill seeks to collect while removing the burden of reporting to municipal health department or district departments of health.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony. I am available for any questions you may have.