



**Testimony of Ingrid Gillespie, Executive Director of Communities 4 Action
Member of the Connecticut Prevention Network (CPN)**

Re: SB 511 An Act Concerning Opioids
Public Health Committee, March 20, 2018

Senator Gerratana, Senator Somers, Representative Steinberg and members of the Public Health Committee, my name is Ingrid Gillespie and I am a member of the Connecticut Prevention Network (CPN) and Executive Director of Communities 4 Action.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in support of Raised Bill No. 511- An Act concerning opioids. This proposed bill addresses an important data gap needed to strengthen Connecticut's multi-prong approach to address the opioid public health crisis.

As Prevention specialists, CPN members are out in the communities constantly sharing data on this public health to:

1. *Keep communities updated on and engaged in addressing this public health crisis.*
2. *Better ensure a data-driven approach to developing and implementing prevention and early intervention strategies. Having accurate data is so important to effective planning. For example*
3. *Develop and show indicators that can measure the status and effectiveness of our interventions.*

As this crisis requires a multiprong approach, we share data that reflects the different perspectives and attempts to give a picture of what is being done to address this crisis. Some of the data collected and shared includes:

Prevention:

- Pounds of unwanted medication collected at state (source: DCP) and local (Police Depts)
- Number of community presentations and attendance
- Number of opioid scripts/town and number of scripts at state level in controlled substances
- Number of local prescribers who have completed mandated education on addiction and alternative pain management (challenging to get these numbers)

Intervention:

- Numbers trained on early screening. A number of CPN members and other organizations do trainings on early screening called SBIRT (Screening, Brief Intervention and if needed, referral to treatment) for adolescents and adults)
- Number of people connected through the Emergency Departments Recovery Coach Initiative to support (*presently 7 hospitals are involved in this very successful initiative)

Treatment and Recovery

- Numbers receiving treatment for OUD (Opioid Use Disorder)

Harm Reduction:

- Number of narcan trainings and kits distributed

There is missing data that can be very helpful to providing an accurate picture to communities. Specifically, we are able to provide sobering data on the increasing number of overdose deaths in Ct but we are not able to provide community members with a more accurate picture that depicts how many (not who) people have been administered narcan and survived. This is data that this bill supports through including this as an accidental poisoning on the list of reportable diseases collected by the local health departments.

The data could be used to more accurately identify the scope of the problem at the local level i.e. what is happening now in our community. If we know that there have been 10 administrations of Narcan in a community, questions that could be answered:

- How many individuals have received those 10 narcan administrations? Every life is important but understanding the scope of the problem can strengthen prevention and early intervention strategies.
- How many doses did they receive? This helps to identify the potency of the drug that is available in that community
- How many Narcan kits are being used? The health department would receive the notification on the overdose and can include the amount of Narcan administered and the source of the Narcan e.g. was it administered by a friend/family who had a kit? Tracking whether or not Narcan kits that are being distributed are being used is another data gap and this bill could help with that information.

Local health departments are the natural repository for this data as they already collect on accidental poisonings. Having this data allows Health Departments, CPN members and others to more accurately report on the scope of the issue and better ensure data-driven community efforts that in turn, can help us be more proactive in our efforts to address this crisis and save lives.

Thank you,



Ingrid Gillespie
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Executive Director of Communities 4 Action.