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**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE**

**Senator Martin M. Looney**

**March 20, 2018**

**IN SUPPORT OF**

**SENATE BILL 511: AN ACT CONCERNING OPIOIDS**

Good morning Senator Gerratana, Representative Steinberg, Senator Somers, Representative Betts and members of the Public Health Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on Senate Bill 511 – An Act Concerning Opioids.

The opioid epidemic continues to grip Connecticut. More than 1,000 Connecticut residents died from opioid-related overdoses in 2017 – more than from car accidents, homicides and suicides combined. We need to continue to work with medical professionals and experts to preserve the gains already made and further expand access to treatment. To that end, Senate Bill 511 would: (1) require the formation of a working group to evaluate methods of combating the opioid epidemic in Connecticut; (2) requires a pharmacist, prior to the dispensing of any opioid drug to a patient, to review the patient's record in the electronic prescription drug monitoring system; (3) mandates that any hospital, emergency medical services provider, health care provider or mental health care professional who treats a patient for an opioid overdose report such overdoses to the local health department. The local health department shall then use the information to develop initiatives to address the prevalence of overdoses; and (4) appropriates \$25 million to the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services for the purpose of providing funding for screening of, early intervention and referral to treatment of persons with opioid use disorder.

I am confident that these measures will add to the other substantial policy achievements championed by this committee in previous years. Thank you for raising this important legislation and for your tireless work on this issue.