



Connecticut Academy of Physician Assistants

One Regency Drive · P. O. Box 30 · Bloomfield, CT 06002

860/243-3977 · Fax 860/286-0787 · connapa@ssmgt.com · www.connapa.org

Testimony provided in support of:

Raised S.B. No. 511

AN ACT CONCERNING OPIOIDS

March 18, 2018

Senator Gerratana, Senator Somers, Representative Steinberg and members of the Public Health Committee:

I am offering testimony in support of raised S.B. 511 which was created to evaluate and establish methods of combatting the opioid crisis in the State of Connecticut. My name is Jason Prevelige, I am a PA, and have practiced emergency medicine for the last 9 years. In addition to emergency medicine, I have also practiced in the specialty of addiction medicine. Prior to my PA education, I worked in several roles in the area of addiction, including years as a substance abuse counselor.

I am representing ConnAPA (The Connecticut Academy of PAs), the professional academy for our profession within Connecticut. ConnAPA wholly supports any reasonable and sensible efforts to help combat the opioid crisis in our state.

In my practice of emergency medicine, at least several times a week I witness, care for, and even often help remove from hastily parked vehicles, the unresponsive, lifeless bodies that have sustained an overdose of an opioid. Sometimes these, often young, patients survive with the use of naloxone and other supportive measures, but many times they do not. When I was still working full time in the addiction community, I very early on in my career stopped counting at 50, how many souls that I took care of who succumbed to their disease.

This epidemic, as it is now referred to as, this disease, is real, and claims far too many lives. It is not a new disease, but it has been brought to the forefront by relatively easy access to scientific advancements of new opioid medications. The reasons for this are several and are not germane to this testimony. However, what we would like to offer is a suggestion for enhancing this act further to potentially save more lives. Methadone maintenance is one treatment modality for opioid addiction, treatment with buprenorphine is another. When utilizing the great Prescription Monitoring and Reporting Program (PMRP) when prescribing, buprenorphine readily appears on the patient's record. As prescribers, that indicates to us that prescribing an opioid would generally not be indicated. However, a patient that is on a methadone maintenance program will go completely unknown to a prescriber. There is unfortunately no communication between the Connecticut Prescription Monitoring and Reporting Program and the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services database of methadone clients. Even patients that have purchased cannabis products via their medical certification program are reflected in the PMRP. We feel it is crucial that this important database be all encompassing and reflect those patients that are currently enrolled in a methadone maintenance program so that there is no error in prescribing, which could lead to fatal results.

We thank you and applaud you for your service and efforts to improve the health and safety of our community.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jason P. Prevelige', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jason P. Prevelige, MHS, PA-C
Immediate Past President
Connecticut Academy of PAs