



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

NED LAMONT
GOVERNOR

MIRIAM DELPHIN-RITTMON, PH.D.
COMMISSIONER

To: General Law Committee
From: Miriam E. Delphin-Rittmon Ph.D., Commissioner
Date: March 12, 2019
Re: Written Testimony regarding HB 7159

Please accept this written testimony from the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) in support of Proposed House Bill 7159 AN ACT ADDRESSING OPIOID USE.

DMHAS has been actively addressing Connecticut's opioid crisis and will continue to provide treatment and recovery services to those struggling with opioid use disorder. DMHAS is the lead state agency for substance use and misuse prevention across the lifespan. DMHAS, in collaboration with state and community stakeholders, works to implement evidence based prevention strategies addressing the opioid crisis. HB 7159 aligns with evidence based strategies that include monitoring access to opioids and educating individuals who have obtained an opioid prescription.

While DMHAS is not directly impacted by HB 7159 the agency supports this bill due to the anticipated positive impact of reducing unnecessary or uninformed opioid use. This bill proposes to utilize the expertise of pharmacists to educate consumers during the course of routine transactions. The bill also provides an opportunity for pharmacy technicians to have a role in addressing the opioid crisis by allowing them access to the electronic prescription drug monitoring program, providing yet another opportunity to flag risky opioid use. DMHAS is especially supportive of the provision that ensures individuals who have received naloxone cannot be denied insurance, an annuity policy or contract based on having a naloxone prescription. DMHAS would also like to emphasize the importance of developing treatment agreements if pain medication is prescribed for longer than twelve weeks.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.