

Insurance and Real Estate Committee  
February 27, 2020

Testimony in Support of:

*H.B. No. 5248, An Act Establishing A Task Force To Study Health Insurance Coverage for Peer Support Services In This State.*

*H.B. No. 5254, An Act Requiring Health Insurance Coverage For Medication-Assisted Treatment For Opioid Use Disorder*

*H.B. No. 5256 An Act Concerning Required Health Insurance Coverage For Detoxification And Substance Abuse Services*

Co-Chairs Scanlon and Lesser; Vice Chairs Dathan and Hartley; Ranking Member Pavalock-D'Amato and Kelly; and distinguished members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee:

*My Name is Anthony Morrissey.*

*As I stand before you today, I stand as a member of a group of constituents who have endured the pain of loss as a result of opioid addiction. I stand as a Husband to a reflective, strong, and grieving wife. I stand as a Brother to a lost, opioid-dependent man who I can no longer look in the eyes or call part of my family.*

*I stand as a Father to a Son ... a loving and considerate Son... a Son who was the loving father of his infant daughter and a husband to his devoted wife... a Son who pleaded, who begged, for help before a relapse happened – a hand UP in beating his opioid addiction, who very simply and to the point ran out of state resources to receive that help.*

*I now stand today as a Father to a 20 year-old Son buried in Connecticut soil who, along with his mother, his wife, his daughter, friends, relatives, and ripples and ripples of those impacted by his struggle and death, will never again be able to share his embrace.*

*How was this allowed to happen? Why wasn't help granted? I'll tell you. It's because his HEALTH COVERAGE for TREATMENT and SERVICES for a significant, recurring, enveloping opioid addiction ... SIMPLY... RAN ... OUT. He just ran out of benefit.*

*My son is one, just ONE, of the 1,200 record-setting opioid-related deaths in Connecticut last year ... an 18% spike from opioid-related deaths in 2018. But here's the thing, setting new highs for opioid-related deaths is nothing new ... and in fact, according to [The CT Post](#) (8/30/2019) and Connecticut Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, Connecticut has set new records **time and time again**, going back as far as 2012 ... and have spiked higher and higher and higher each and every year without thought or change to the state's health coverage policies.*

*According to The [Hartford Courant](#) (2/21/2020) all these deaths were incurred as a result of "both a lack of education about addiction and a comprehensive, statewide strategy to turn the*

*tide.” Perhaps deaths due to opioids could have been slowed had time been taken for legislative action ... a course correction as a result of furthering addiction programs, education, research, and support ... providing help without limits.*

*The simple, cold truth is this: My son and ALL THE NUMBERS of citizen deaths recorded for the state of Connecticut, snuffed out as a result of opioid addiction, did not have those unending resources ... neither the enduring education and comprehensive counseling nor the continuous access to a rehabilitation facility nor health coverage for potentially life-saving medication to help them overcome dependence nor new and better research, understandings, and methods for coping ... to fight back against the slow, tormenting, suffocation of opioid addiction.*

*Their time has passed ... and Connecticut’s time to ponder the opioid situation is up.*

*Because it’s Not just a situation. It’s Not just somewhat of a problem. It’s Not just contained to one area or another ... It’s a crisis. A scourge. What researchers and journalists in the entire state of Connecticut and throughout the nation all agree is an open-ended epidemic.*

*The nation’s eyes are on this great state, our opioid-addiction epidemic, and on your support or non-support of Bills such as H.B.5248, H.B. 5254, and H.B.5256 to fight and win this battle.*

*TIME IS UP ... and now is your time to take action.*

*I thank you for your time and for your consideration of support for H.B.5248, H.B. 5254, and H.B.5256.*