

Public Health Committee
March 2nd, 2021



Testimony in Support of HB-5583

AN ACT CONCERNING EMERGENCY INTERVENTION BY A POLICE OFFICER WHEN A PERSON SUFFERS AN OVERDOSE.

To allow a police officer to take a person into custody when the officer has reasonable cause to believe that such person is experiencing a drug overdose.

Co-Chairs Horn and Bradley; Vice Chairs Osten, Paolilo; Ranking Members Champagne and Green; and distinguished members of the Public Safety & Security Committee:

My name is R Hanranhan, I'm part of a growing coalition of your constituents and we thank you for allowing us to submit testimony in support of HB-5583

A friend suggested I share my story with you so that you can better understand what our community is going through as you deliberate these critical proposals - so here goes:

My brother has had an opioid addiction for many many years now. He has only been in treatment for 30 days once and that was a horrible experience because the treatment center kept telling him that he might have to pack up and go if the insurance does approve another week. He was so focused on if the insurance would pay that he could not solely focus on his treatment. It was very upsetting. Since I was the one who would be picking him up from the center 5 hours away, I was also very stressed and waited anxiously for the phone call to see what is happening. This went on for weeks as insurance approvals were usually for a few days or a week at a time. There were times he had to wait days for approval waiting in limbo. I think this is a horrific way to treat addicts. If the treatment is for 30 days, then it should be for 30 days no questions asked. Addicts should not have to worry about weather they need to pack up and leave after a few hours of being told that the insurance did not approve their stay. The frustrating part is that his insurance initially approved the 30 day treatment center and that should have been enough. There shouldn't be daily or weekly approvals especially when we know 30 days is just a drop in the bucket compared to the time it takes to get sober. Even though my brother has been in treatment once, he really should have been in treatment many, many times. He has overdosed 5 times in the past three years. He wants to overcome his addiction. He talks about a day when he is sober. He attends meetings. But he really needs structured help from a high quality treatment center which he does not want to do partly because of the stress from constantly worrying if the insurance is going to drop him while in treatment just like his first and only experience. I can't imagine if he reached out to his insurance for addiction help, they deny it and he dies weeks later which has had happen to families. It is time for us as a society to provide more reliable support to those suffering from addiction!

I simply ask you to strongly consider taking the following action:

- *Review and support HB-5583, as well as a package of similar proposals that our foundation refers to as Brian Cody's Law.*
- *Understand that hundreds members affiliated with Brian Cody's Law are in support of this proposal, sponsored by State Representative Carol Hall, from the fifty-ninth assembly district.*
- *Consider as well that Brian Cody's Law calls supports any proposal that provides enhanced support systems to help those struggling with opioid addiction, stricter penalties for suppliers of lethal overdoses, better oversight of tracking opioids and waste, and ending safe havens – such as 'trap houses' where numerous overdoses occur on a frequent basis.*
- *Please also consider that Brian Cody's law opposes taking addicted people into 'custody', we should not continue the 'lock our way out of this' approach - but rather our organization suggests a 72 hour hold and urges the client be placement into a clinical setting with appropriate supports in place.*

- *Read up on the factors that are driving this effort forward on our website BrianCodysLaw.org and take action with us.*

In this last decade, 500,000 Americans lost their lives to opioid use disorder. In 2020 alone, right here in your state, overdose deaths hit historic levels. Again! Thousands of citizens here in Connecticut have died since our organization's initial requests were filed. This simply cannot continue!

Do we have your support?