

# Committee on Children JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** HB-5244  
AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROVISION OF OPIOID ANTAGONISTS IN  
**Title:** SCHOOLS.  
**Vote Date:** 3/11/2022  
**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable Substitute  
**PH Date:** 3/1/2022  
**File No.:**

***Disclaimer:** The following JOINT FAVORABLE Report is prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and does not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose.*

## **SPONSORS OF BILL:**

Committee on Children

## **CO-SPONSORS OF BILL:**

Rep. John-Michael Parker  
Rep. Gary A. Turco  
Rep. Geraldo Reyes

## **REASONS FOR BILL:**

To approve grants to school districts for the implementation of opioid antagonists, training in screening, brief intervention, and referral to treatment for adolescents (A-SBIRT) as part of the staff in-service training program, so educators and staff can administer opioid antagonists in case of emergency. In response to a student death by overdose, this bill empowers educators by training them to notice the signs of overdose and equipping them with the power of intervention, they would be prepared to reverse the deadly effects of opioids in children.

The substitute language specifies conditions and procedures for the administration of the medication by school personnel. Specifies the conditions and procedures for the storage and administration of the opioid antagonists to students who do not have prior written authorization for the administration of the medicine. It explains school nurses' responsibility in the maintenance of opioid antagonists and specifies under what conditions someone other than the school nurse may administer the medicine.

## **RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:**

Sarah Healy Eagan, Acting Child Advocate from the Office of the Child Advocate, supports the bill and additionally recommends a comprehensive public health and education plan for children and communities regarding the storage, utilization, and effects of various substances, and that this information specifically addresses the dangers of accidental ingestion by children.

Charlene Russell-Tucker, Commissioner Designate of the State Department of Education, supports the bill, but calls attention to the Department's current staffing capacity, explaining that there would need to be additional funding for a full-time employee to administer the grant program. SDE also recommends that the requirement to develop guidance be extended to July 1, 2023 for the department to realistically meet the deadline.

#### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

Craig Miner, Senator of the Connecticut General Assembly, supports the bill and acknowledges its importance, recommending that the grants are available to boards of education before the next fiscal year, and funding should be made available immediately to provide the emergency measure as soon as possible.

Senior Legislative Associate of the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities Zachary McKeown supports the bill as it would provide essential state assistance to help our most vulnerable youth in emergency situations.

Director of the Connecticut Education Association Ray Rossomando supports this bill.

Dr. Daniel Kerekes, Resident Physician In-Training in CT, supports the bill. He discusses his time training individuals on the administration of opioid antagonists, and how easy it was to train people to be prepared in such emergency situations. He believes it is necessary to have opioid antagonists in schools citing the increased and widespread exposure of drugs to children. He expressed his thoughts through oral testimony during the public hearing.

Medical Director at Rushford, Chief of Psychiatry at Midstate Medical Center Dr. Jonathan Craig Allen supports the bill. He speaks to the exploding numbers of opioid overdose deaths, and the safety of the medication to reverse the negative effect of opioids. He believes this bill will lead the way towards healthier communities.

Robert Dudley, Immediate Past President of the CT Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, supports the bill. Dudley believes that increasing education about opiates and increasing Narcan presence in schools can prevent deaths in the case of overdose.

Connecticut Association of Boards of Education Gail Heath supports the bill, recognizing it is an effort to stop a student's death because of drugs. The bill will enhance the ability to protect students.

Interim President of Association of School Nurses of Connecticut, Donna Kosiorowski, supports the bill through written and oral testimony, given during a public hearing. She is, however, concerned that it is beyond the scope of school nurses, especially after having to adopt more responsibilities in regard to Covid-19.

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

None expressed.

**Reported by: Molly Lukiwsky**

**Date: 3/22/2022**