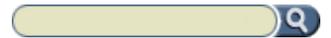


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## Press Release



### For Immediate Release

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### Governor Hassan Testifies in Support of Legislation to Combat Heroin and Opioid Crisis

CONCORD – Continuing her work to strengthen the state's efforts to combat the heroin and opioid crisis and help save lives, Governor Maggie Hassan testified today at the Joint Senate Judiciary and House Criminal Justice Committee hearing on Senate Bill 576, legislation that the Joint Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Epidemic recommended be expedited.

"In order to stem – and reverse – the tide of this horrible epidemic, we must all work together, every single day on a comprehensive approach that includes supporting law enforcement while focusing on strengthening prevention, treatment and recovery efforts," Governor Hassan said. "And the legislation that you are considering today is an important step forward that will give patients, providers, parents and law enforcement better tools in the fight against heroin and opioid abuse."

Senate Bill 576 contains several provisions included in the comprehensive proposal that Governor Hassan put forward last November, including measures relative to the laws and penalties for fentanyl, evaluation criteria and prior authorization for insurance companies, the state's prescription drug monitoring program, and the membership of the Board of Medicine.

"There is broad, bipartisan support for these measures – as well as many other items to strengthen our efforts to combat substance abuse that the legislature will take up this session," Governor Hassan said. "While passing this legislation and signing it into law later this month will be an important step forward, we know that the fight against addiction is far from over. And we all recognize that there is more work to do to support law enforcement, to increase access to treatment and treatment capacity, to strengthen our recovery networks, and to prevent addiction in the first place. We also cannot lose sight of the importance of our bipartisan health protection program in combating this crisis."

### The following is the full text of Governor Hassan's prepared testimony to the Joint Committee:

Thank you Senator Carson, Representative Tholl and the Joint Senate Judiciary and House Criminal Justice committees for having me here today.

I would also like to take a moment to commend Senator Bradley, Representative Hinch and all of the legislators from both parties on the Joint Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Epidemic for their hard work on this critical legislation over the past several months.

As we all know, the heroin and opioid crisis is the most pressing public health and safety challenge facing our state.

According to projections by the Chief Medical Examiner, more than 400 Granite Staters died from a drug overdose last year. And thousands more have overdosed, their lives saved only by the quick action of first responders, medical providers and their family and friends.

Everywhere I go, I hear from people who have been affected by substance abuse. It touches people from all walks of life. And it accounts for billions of dollars in negative impacts on our economy.

In order to stem – and reverse – the tide of this horrible epidemic, we must all work together, every single day on a comprehensive approach that includes supporting law enforcement while focusing on strengthening prevention, treatment and recovery efforts.

And the legislation that you are considering today is an important step forward that will give patients, providers,

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parents and law enforcement better tools in the fight against heroin and opioid abuse.

It will crack down on fentanyl, which was the major cause of overdose death in 2015 and is more lethal than heroin.

It will help us streamline access to treatment by requiring all insurance companies to use the same evaluation criteria and removing prior authorization requirements in certain cases.

It continues to strengthen our prescription drug monitoring program – mandating greater use by prescribers, expanding access to the program and permitting state funding for it.

And it adds two members to the Board of Medicine, including a pain management specialist.

There is broad, bipartisan support for these measures – as well as many other items to strengthen our efforts to combat substance abuse that the legislature will take up this session.

While passing this legislation and signing it into law later this month will be an important step forward, we know that the fight against addiction is far from over.

And we all recognize that there is more work to do to support law enforcement, to increase access to treatment and treatment capacity, to strengthen our recovery networks, and to prevent addiction in the first place.

We also cannot lose sight of the importance of our bipartisan health protection program in combating this crisis.

From law enforcement officials, firefighters and emergency medical workers. To families, people in recovery, and our business community. To our judicial system, medical providers and health care workers. We are all in this together.

This is an “all-hands-on-deck” moment for our state. And the people of New Hampshire are counting on their elected officials to follow the example that they set for us every day by working together to solve problems and improve their communities.

Our bipartisan efforts to expedite this legislation represent the tradition of collective problem-solving that we are known for in New Hampshire. And it will require us continuing to work together in that same spirit to stem – and eventually – reverse the tide of drug overdoses in our state.

It is going to be difficult, and it will require our constant vigilance and perseverance. But we will be successful, because we are Granite Staters and we work together to do hard things.

I look forward to continuing that important work with all of you.

Thank you.

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