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Press Release



For Immediate Release

February 11, 2016

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Governor Hassan Urges Senate Health and Human Services Committee to Support Additional Resources to Combat the Heroin and Opioid Crisis

CONCORD – Continuing her efforts to combat the heroin and opioid crisis and help save lives, Governor Maggie Hassan today sent a letter to the Senate Health and Human Services Committee urging support for Senate Bill 533 as amended, which would provide additional resources to the Governor's Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention, Treatment and Recovery and add an attorney at the Department of Justice to focus on opioid-related crimes and issues.

"Stemming and reversing the tide of drug overdoses requires a comprehensive approach that includes supporting law enforcement and strengthening prevention, treatment and recovery, and Senate Bill 533 as amended provides critical resources to those efforts," Governor Hassan wrote. "By strengthening support for the Governor's Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention, Treatment and Recovery, we can improve prevention and education efforts to stop addiction before it starts, while also supporting those battling addiction by ensuring they have access to immediate treatment and a robust, long-term recovery system. In addition, a new attorney at the Department of Justice to focus on opioid-related crimes and issues will help support local law enforcement in their efforts to seize illicit drugs and arrest street-level dealers."

As amended, Senate Bill 533 would provide an additional \$5 million in funding over the current biennium for the Governor's Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention, Treatment and Recovery, as well as roughly \$150,000 for an additional attorney focused on opioid-related crimes and issues at the Department of Justice.

"Our economy continues to strengthen, and revenues are already more than \$40 million dollars above projections this fiscal year," Governor Hassan wrote. "We can afford to address this challenge, and we must provide additional resources to those on the front lines in order to strengthen our efforts to combat this crisis and help save lives."

The full text of the Governor's letter to the Senate Health and Human Services Committee is below.

February 11, 2016

The Honorable Andy Sanborn
Chairman, Senate Health and Human Services Committee
Room 100, State House
Concord, NH 03301

Dear Mr. Chairman and Members of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee:

I write in support of Senate Bill 533 as amended, "making certain supplemental appropriations" to combat the heroin and opioid crisis and help save lives.

As we all know, the heroin and opioid crisis is the most urgent public health and public safety challenge facing our state. Recognizing the serious threat that substance abuse poses to our people and to our high quality of life, we have worked together on a comprehensive approach to address this horrible epidemic, including enacting bipartisan legislation earlier this year to crack down on fentanyl, streamline access to treatment and strengthen our prescription drug monitoring program. But we know that this fight is far from over and that we must be constant and focused in our work to strengthen these efforts, and to give patients, providers, families, educators and law enforcement better tools to combat this horrible epidemic.

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Stemming and reversing the tide of drug overdoses requires a comprehensive approach that includes supporting law enforcement and strengthening prevention, treatment and recovery, and Senate Bill 533 as amended provides critical resources to those efforts. By strengthening support for the Governor's Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention, Treatment and Recovery, we can improve prevention and education efforts to stop addiction before it starts, while also supporting those battling addiction by ensuring they have access to immediate treatment and a robust, long-term recovery system. In addition, a new attorney at the Department of Justice to focus on opioid-related crimes and issues will help support local law enforcement in their efforts to seize illicit drugs and arrest street-level dealers.

Our economy continues to strengthen, and revenues are already more than \$40 million dollars above projections this fiscal year. We can afford to address this challenge, and we must provide additional resources to those on the front lines in order to strengthen our efforts to combat this crisis and help save lives.

Thank you for your consideration.

With every good wish,

Margaret Wood Hassan
Governor

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