

Proclaiming September 2015 As Lost To Addiction Awareness Month In Ulster County

Referred to: The Public Health and Social Services Committee (Chairman Lopez and Legislators Allen, Belfiglio, Litts and Provenzano)

Legislators Carl Belfiglio, David Donaldson, John Parete and Mary Wawro offer the following:

WHEREAS, August 31st is recognized as International Overdose Awareness Day; and

WHEREAS, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), nationwide, drug-induced overdose deaths now surpass deaths by gunshot wounds or motor vehicle crashes in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Michael Botticelli, Director of the National Drug Control Policy stated, “In 2013, one American died every 12 minutes from an overdose, most involving opioids, which include prescription pain medicines and heroin. A substance abuse disorder is a chronic disease that can be prevented and treated, and from which recovery is possible”; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Botticelli further noted “We don’t predicate saving someone’s life from other diseases based on their compliance with treatment. We save their lives because their lives are worth saving. Families suffering from opioid abuse, he concluded, need to know there is hope and life and joy on the other side of addiction”; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Tom Frieden, director of the CDC, stated “We had a fourfold increase in deaths from opiates in a decade”; and

WHEREAS, the CDC found that heroin deaths doubled between 2010 and 2012; and

WHEREAS, in a Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) national survey on Drug Use and Health conducted from 2002 to 2013, approximately 20% of people 12 to 17 years old do not believe using heroin once or twice a week is harmful; and

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WHEREAS, Dr. Mary Jeanne Kreek, a professor and head of the Laboratory of the Biology of Addictive Diseases at Rockefeller University, stated opiate addiction “alters multiple regions in the brain, including those that regulate reward, memory and learning, stress responsivity, and hormonal response, as well as executive function which is involved in decision-making – simply put, when to say yes and when to say no”; and

WHEREAS, the Partnership for Drug Free Kids estimates 85 million Americans have been touched by addiction; and

WHEREAS, loving families in our community and communities across the nation, struggling to guide an individual suffering from substance abuse disorder toward recovery, are living a roller coaster of remissions and relapses; and

WHEREAS, it is these families that have become the experts in grief recovery, overdose prevention, harm reduction, advocacy, and reality-based education for our communities; and

WHEREAS, it is this previously stigmatized and faceless community of families that is speaking up to warn people about the tragic reality of drug addiction; and

WHEREAS, the Ulster County Legislature had recognized the need to supply more information about heroin and opioid abuse and misuse through the creation of the Ulster County Coalition Against Narcotics to recommend solutions to prevent and protect the public from opiate drug abuse in Ulster County; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, the Ulster County Legislature continues to recognize that raising awareness, breaking stigmas, and calling attention to this public health crisis is the cornerstone to combating this public health crisis; and, be it further

RESOLVED, the members of the Ulster County Legislature take this opportunity to honor the lives lost to addiction and to pay tribute to the families that were left behind, as well as to those families openly or privately continuing, to fight against this devastating disease; and, be it further

