



ULSTER COUNTY

LEGISLATIVE NEWS

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UCAN Panel Seeks Extension On Its Good Work

(Kingston, NY) While the heroin and opioid crisis that sparked the creation of the Ulster Coalition Against Narcotics (UCAN) has not abated, the group itself has moved steadily closer to the completion of a study to identify how individuals can be helped, identify other ways to prevent abuse, and identify ways in which to protect the public from opiate drug abuse in Ulster County.

The Administrative Director of the Upstate New York Poison Center reported in April 2014 for the Joint Senate Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Addiction that 70% of drug arrests in Ulster County were for heroin or opioids, up 30% from a few years ago.

Legislator Carl Belfiglio, a member of UCAN, highlighted “UCAN is a board charged with bringing recommendations to the Legislature on the actions they could take to address the Heroin and Opioid issue.”

“This panel of distinguished and professional individuals has done great work in just six months,” stated Legislative Chairman John Parete. “They have held complex discussions with County experts, attended National conferences, and even testified in Albany. Their draft recommendations are comprehensive and exactly what we were looking for from an advisory board.”

The current recommendations from the Panel are being finalized and compiled into the final report to be submitted to the Ulster County Legislature. Some of the proposed recommendations include OASAS licensed programs only referring opiate dependent patients to OASAS approved residential program/facility, having Narcan Kits distributed to clients being released from detoxification units that have a history of opioid use, routinely evaluate incarcerated individuals and test them for drugs while they are incarcerated, create Public Service Announcements to warn the public that taking opioid prescribed medications may have dire consequences including overdoses and more.

“The meeting with the Commissioner of Health and Mental Health Carol Smith really identified what we offer in Ulster County and highlighted what we could offer”, stated UCAN Chairman Lou Klein. “I look forward to the final report and moving forward with the Legislature in acting on these recommendations.”

Resolution No. 259, having passed both the Law Enforcement and Public Safety and Public Health and Social Services Committees, will be before the Legislature at the July 21st session. The next UCAN meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, July 14, 2015 at 5:30 PM in the Karen L. Binder Library located on the 6th floor of the County Office Building in Kingston.

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