



## Key Message Document

*Key Message:* ASAP appreciates that the opioids pandemic was featured prominently in Governor Cuomo's State of the State and that he is advancing a budget proposal to tax opioid manufacturers.

**BUT that policy will only have a meaningful impact on the fight to combat the out-of-control opioids crisis if the funding is dedicated to the substance use disorder community – particularly workforce needs.** This pandemic gets exponentially worse every year and the State has barely invested a fraction of what it will take to stop it.

The proposal as currently written has no such assurances:

If it is enacted, the Governor has stated that \$26M of the \$127M the tax is expected to raise would go to fund heroin and opioid addiction services. However, the vast majority of these funds would be used for prior commitments and virtually none of the \$26M is new money to fight this crisis.

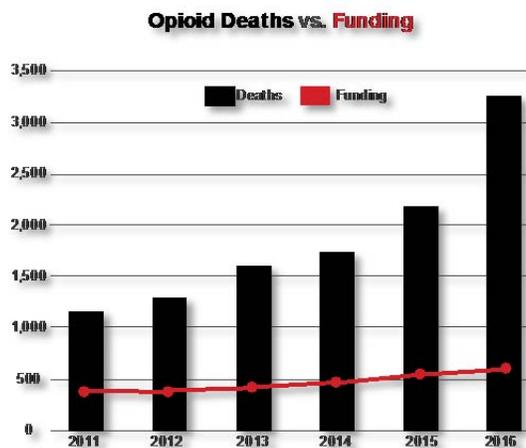
- There is NO explanation as to where the other \$101M from the surcharge would go, and no commitment that it would go to support the substance use disorder (SUD) workforce that is on the front lines of this pandemic.
- **There should be a clear commitment that the dollars would be used only for prevention, treatment and recovery services, including strengthening support for the SUD workforce.**
- If the tax does not go through, and there is no "Plan B<sub>2</sub>" it could mean a \$26M cut to the SUD community in the middle of the opioid crisis.
- This continues a trend since at least 2011 of New York State and Governor Cuomo dedicating minimal new State funding for heroin and opioid addiction services, all in the

midst of a massive public health crisis. This approach, not surprisingly, has failed to halt the increased deaths due to overdose.

Here are the facts:

- Addiction, hospitalizations and deaths from opioids have increased more than 50 percent in New York in the last five years (according to Rockefeller Institute)
- 1,290 people died in NYS in 2012; 1,710 people died in 2014; and 3,648 people died in 2016 from opioid-related overdoses
- Heroin overdose is now the leading cause of accidental death in the state
- According to the state's own task force report, 1.4 million New Yorkers suffer from a substance use disorder
- **While the number of opioid overdoses and deaths has climbed steadily in this state, there has been NO corresponding increase in resources to fight this scourge – funding has barely kept up with inflation**
- The field has lost a third of its SUD prevention staff over the past 15 years. This is no way to address a pandemic that affects families across NYSW

## #SuperstormOpioids



**What is NECESSARY in this year's budget if NYS wants to stop the upward trajectory of opioid overdoses and deaths:**

- **A significant investment in the SUD services system (ASAP is requesting \$100M initial investment) to ensure a ready, able and stable prevention, treatment and recovery workforce so that services are available to people when and where they need them.**

The Governor himself said in the State of the State that “the time for action is now, before we lose another single life.”

Clearly the proposed budget does not provide the resources necessary to match this call to action.