



February 9, 2018

Honorable John Flanagan, Majority Leader of the New York State Senate
Honorable Jeffrey Klein, Senate Majority Coalition Leader
Honorable Carl Heastie, Speaker of the New York State Assembly
Honorable George Amedore, Chair of the Senate Committee on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse
Honorable Linda Rosenthal, Chair of the Assembly Committee on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse
New York State Capitol
Albany, New York 12247

Dear Legislative Leaders and Committee Chairs,

When the President's own Opioid Task Force members call its work a charade, we have to seriously question the federal government's ability to make real progress in stopping the skyrocketing trajectory of death and despair associated with opioids. That makes the Legislature the last the line of defense for the tens of thousands of New Yorkers who are affected by the horrors of opioid addiction.

We are in an urgent situation. This is the largest public health crisis in modern times with no end in sight. In fact, we are moving backward in the fight to combat the opioid pandemic. We already know more people will die from heroin and opioids in 2018 than in 2017, just like 2017 was deadlier than the year before.

The Governor correctly stated in his State of the State message that "the time for action is now, before we lose another single life," and we strongly support his Executive Budget proposal to impose a surcharge on the sale of opioids, for the purpose of raising funds to address the heroin and opioid addiction crisis facing our State.

Unfortunately, the actual budget request would divert the vast majority of those new funds for unrelated purposes, and remaining funds would support previously announced initiatives. For the second year in a row, during this unprecedented crisis, there is virtually no new State Aid funding to expand and support services to address this pandemic. This is a blueprint for failure. As New York has done to combat previous public health crises including crack/cocaine, HIV/AIDS, and nicotine and cigarette smoking, we need a comprehensive plan coupled with a commitment of resources that matches the magnitude of the problem.

The time for talk at both the federal and State level is over. The Governor was absolutely correct: "the time for action is now, before we lose another single life." Our response has to match the magnitude of #SuperstormOpioids.

Very truly yours,

John Coppola
Executive Director

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cc: Honorable Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Minority Leader of the New York State Senate
Honorable Brian Kolb, Minority Leader of the Assembly
Honorable Kevin Parker, Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse
Honorable Mark Johns, Ranking Member of the Assembly Committee on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse



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