

New Hampshire Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counselors Association
Public Policy Committee Report
November 21, 2014

This legislative year had the committee following various bills in Concord. Legislative updates include the defeat of the current efforts to legalize and/or decriminalize the use of marijuana in NH. Knowing these efforts are not going away and with the results of our member's survey calling for NHADACA to provide education to the public on both sides, we hosted the Marijuana forum in October. Efforts to build a Casino failed after a number of votes however we believe this bill will also be reintroduced in 2015. The most important piece of legislation passed during the session was the Medicaid Expansion bill adding up to 50,000 more NH residents. Early estimates suggest an additional 7,000 will meet criteria to qualify for the substance abuse benefit. The NH Bureau of Drug and Alcohol Services (BDAS) are continuing to work with DHHS to prepare current providers to meet the challenge. Jacqui Abikoff, Lori Magoon and Dianne Pepin have been at the table representing NHADACA.

Our Congressional delegation is taking active roles in the heroin epidemic. Senator Jeanne Shaheen held round table discussions around the State. I was in attendance at the meeting in Franklin last May where she was with Michael Botticelli, acting director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy. We have met with director Botticelli on numerous occasions in Washington at the advocacy conferences. The consensus was the problem cannot be solved by just law enforcement, treatment, prevention, or recovery services by themselves. It needs to be a combined approach. Director Botticelli reported that the Federal Block Grant will be level funded for FY 2015. They envision that as insurance covers more of treatment services then the block grant can be shifted to prevention and recovery services.

During the last couple of months I have been encouraged by the non-partisan bills be filed to deal with the escalating synthetic drug issues highlighted by the "overdoses" in Manchester. Senator Kelly Ayotte has co-sponsored a bill with Diane Feinstein for California to expand the language in helping to deal with the issue.

On the national level, Public Policy Committee members, Charles Busisson, Amanda Snyder, Lori Magoon and myself traveled to Washington D.C. and, in conjunction with the NAADAC Advocacy in Action Conference last Spring to be met by a "blizzard". This snow storm shut the city down for two days interrupting some of our scheduled meetings. (The storm consisted of 2 inches of snow!) We were able to meet with staffers from Congresswomen Carol Shea Porter and Ann Kuster's offices and were in contact with them during the early part of the summer in regards to data concerning the synthetic drug and opiate overdose issues. These meetings and contacts allow us educate them to the funding and policy priorities of our profession, to the value of treatment and to the importance of incorporating our insights, priorities and expertise in the development of healthcare reform policies and mandates. We continued to focus on the need for the Federal Block Grant to continue to provide funding for treatment for those who can least afford it. We also brought to light the release from the FDA of the "super oxy" Zyhydro which went on the market while we were there.

Respectfully submitted by,
Peter DalPra