ECLEG JUN05'12 AM10:38

A RESOLUTION TO BE SUBMITTED BY LEGISLATORS GRANT, MAZUR, HOGUES, MARINELLI, LOUGHRAN & McCRACKEN

RE: Expressing Support for State Legislation to Effectuate a Real-Time Electronic Prescription Drug Tracking System to Combat Opioid Abuse and Diversion

WHEREAS, according to the New York State Office of Alcoholism & Substance Abuse Services, Western New York has the highest percentage of "admissions with opioid pain reliever" of any region in New York State; and

WHEREAS, opioids are routinely prescribed for pain management and can be safe and effective when used appropriately; and

WHEREAS, the potential for misuse is caused, in some part, by the feeling of euphoria and well-being that opioids can induce in some individuals; and

WHEREAS, prescription drugs that induce this morphine-like effect are more likely to be abused by individuals who become addicted, or are more prone to diversion, theft and re-sale on the streets; and

WHEREAS, New York State ranks 11th in the nation for admissions to chemical dependency treatment programs for opioids other than heroin; and

WHEREAS, a centralized, electronic reporting and tracking system for prescription drugs that is accessible to not only physicians, but pharmacists as well, is essential to flagging incidences of "doctor shopping" by persons addicted to prescription pain relievers, as well as flagging dangerous "cocktails" of drugs prescribed by multiple providers and presented for filling at multiple pharmacies; and

WHEREAS, the advocacy efforts of Avi and Julie Israel – who founded "Save the Michaels of the World" following the tragic loss of their son, Michael, one year ago have brought the attention of the media and policymakers to this crisis and highlighted the need to take prompt action to avoid similar tragedies caused by prescription drug addiction coupled with the inadequate capacity within the mental health/substance abuse treatment system to effectively treat patients addicted to opioids; and

WHEREAS, currently, pharmacists are not allowed to access Controlled Substance Information (CSI) on Dispensed Prescriptions, Confidential Drug Utilization Report as this system is only accessible to physicians and others who prescribe, rather than dispense, medication; and

WHEREAS, the Pharmacists' Association of Western New York and New York State is to be commended for their efforts to address this societal problem so detrimental to those addicted, their families and the pharmacy community that itself has become vulnerable to violence perpetrated by desperate addicts or thieves in search of prescription pain killers; and

Whereas, the Pharmacists' Association recognizes and advocates the need for proper, continuing education for all health care providers involved in prescribing and dispensing of narcotics; and

Whereas, the Pharmacists' Association also urges that public policy be developed to not only stop diversion of prescription drugs, but also to have in place adequate programs for the rehabilitation of persons who become addicted to prescription drugs.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that the Erie County Legislature convey its support for a real-time prescription drug tracking system to provide immediate feedback to those involved in prescribing as well as dispensing highly addictive medications; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this Honorable Body express its support for continuing, proper education for health care providers – whether they prescribe or dispense prescription drugs – in order to stay up-to-date on emerging trends in the community regarding abuse and/or diversion of prescription drugs; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the epidemic of prescription drug abuse, diversion and re-sale demonstrates an unmet need for the expansion of drug abuse rehabilitation services, particularly more in-patient beds, without delay; and be it further

RESOLVED, that certified copies of this resolution be conveyed to Governor Andrew Cuomo, Attorney General Eric Schneiderman, Speaker of the Assembly Sheldon Silver, Senator Majority Leader Dean Skelos and all others deemed necessary and proper.

FISCAL IMPACT: None for resolution.