

The New York State Assembly
Annual Report



**20
25**



**Committee on
Alcoholism
& Drug Abuse**

Speaker Carl E. Heastie
Phil Steck, CHAIR



Phillip Steck
Member of Assembly
110th District

THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

CHAIR
Committee on Alcoholism
and Drug Abuse

COMMITTEES

Health
Insurance
Judiciary
Labor
Oversight, Analysis and
Investigation

December 15, 2025
Honorable Carl E. Heastie
Speaker of the Assembly
Legislative Office Building, Room 932
Albany, NY 12248

Dear Speaker Heastie:

On behalf of the Assembly Standing Committee on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse, I respectfully submit the Committee's 2025 Annual Report. During my sixth year as Chair, I have helped pass critical legislation to create a Recovery Ready Workplace certification, allow our first responders to have access to all formulations and dosages of FDA approved opioid antagonists, expand our fentanyl test strip programs, and increase transparency with the Opioid Settlement fund. Additionally, the Committee has held three hearings to hear expert testimony regarding fentanyl, problem gambling, and current behavioral health workforce shortage.

Last year, for the first time, we provided \$1.2 million for 12 not-for-profit programs that treat co-occurring substance abuse and mental health disorders. This year, the New York State Budget will continue to fund these critical programs. I have heard directly from patients and providers who have benefited from this program and were able to receive the funding promptly. I am encouraged that \$500,000 has been included in the budget to study my proposal to infuse the twelve state-run Addiction Treatment Centers (ATCs) with resources to treat co-occurring disorders. I am optimistic we will accomplish this in next year's budget.

I am also very proud that my proposal to increase the transparency of the Opioid Settlement Fund has been included in the budget. I have been highly critical over the years of the lack of transparency regarding how the funding has been allocated and to whom it has been awarded. Starting this year, the legislature will receive an annual report outlining the amount of money an entity is granted, the intended use of those funds, and an analysis of the effectiveness of the expenditures made in the previous year. This is a critical step forward to ensuring that we are investing in effective programs to treat those with substance use disorder.

This Legislative session, the State has continued the distribution of funding from the Opioid Settlement Fund. In the 2025-2026 SFY, \$65 million will be disbursed with \$19.4 million allocated to local governments and \$45.7 million allocated for state investments.

In the upcoming Legislative session, the Committee will examine the expert testimony we heard from our three hearings and take legislative actions. For example, after our fentanyl hearing, I introduced legislation to establish a test strip program to detect other adulterants besides fentanyl, limit who can buy and sell medetomidine, increase the transparency regarding how opioid settlement funds are being spent by localities, and update the drug paraphernalia laws.

I am especially interested in tackling the issue of problem sports betting with commonsense proposals that will ensure users of sports betting platforms are protected from the risks of problem sports betting. My office is currently reviewing the testimony the committee heard at our problem gambling hearing and drafting legislation based on the expert recommendations.

Thank you again for your continued support of the Assembly Standing Committee on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse. I look forward to working with you and my Assembly colleagues to ensure that effective prevention, treatment, and recovery services are accessible to all individuals and families who have been affected by substance use disorder and problem gambling.

Sincerely,



Phillip Steck

Chair, Assembly Committee on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse

**2025 ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY
STANDING COMMITTEE ON ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG ABUSE**

Phillip Steck

Chair

Committee Members

Majority

Maritza Davila
Emily Gallagher
Judy Griffin
John T. McDonald III
Karines Reyes
Tommy John Schiavoni
Al Stirpe
Claire Valdez
John Zaccaro, Jr.

Minority

Alec Brook-Krasny
Keith Brown – Ranking Member
Scott Gray
Brian Maher

Committee Staff

Dylan MacQuoid – Legislative Director

Program and Counsel Staff

Janice Nieves – Assistant Secretary for Program and Policy
Sierra Stevenson – Legislative Analyst
Michael Hegarty – Associate Counsel
Alice Bagley, Executive Secretary

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Assembly Committee on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse develops and considers legislation impacting programs that provide prevention, treatment, and recovery services for individuals and families in New York State.

The Committee has oversight of the New York State Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS) to ensure that its policies and initiatives will improve and expand access to prevention, treatment, and recovery services statewide. The Members of the Committee bring forth the concerns and ideas from their districts to create a collaborative approach to New York State's substance use disorder policy.

OASAS oversees a service system that includes approximately 1,700 prevention, treatment, and recovery programs serving over 730,000 individuals per year. This includes the direct operation of 12 Addiction Treatment Centers where doctors, nurses, and clinical staff provide inpatient and residential services to approximately 8,000 individuals per year. OASAS oversees a comprehensive education and prevention program, supporting 159 schools and community-based providers throughout New York.

The Office of Addiction Services and Supports provides education and training to professionals working with clients and administers a professional credentialing process for addiction professionals, including certified alcoholism and substance abuse counselors, prevention professionals and specialists and problem gambling counselors.

II. STATE BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

The Committee carefully considered funding priorities and how to effectively allocate resources. Some of the highlights from the SFY 2025-26 Enacted Budget include:

State Operations

- The Legislature provided \$395,000 to support the administrative costs of the Opioid Settlement Fund.

Aid to Localities

- The Legislature modified the Executive 2.1 percent Targeted Inflationary Increase (TII) by adding an additional \$50.5 million to support a 0.5 percent increase, for a total of 2.6 percent, in the enacted budget. The State fiscal year total cost for the Human Services agencies TII would be \$262.6 million, including \$15.5 million for OASAS.
- The Legislature provided \$7.5 million for the Opioid Settlement Fund to reflect additional receipts consistent with statewide opioid settlement agreements.
- The Legislature provided support for the following programs:
 - \$2 million for Substance Abuse Prevention and Intervention Specialists (SAPIS);
 - \$500,000 for Family and Children's Association;
 - \$250,000 for Catholic Charities of Orange, Sullivan, and Ulster;
 - \$250,000 for Samaritan Daytop Village;
 - \$250,000 for Addiction Recovery Supportive Transportation;
 - \$250,000 for Coalition for Behavioral Health (InUnity Alliance);
 - \$150,000 for CUNY Graduate School of Public Health and Health Policy for Harlem Strong Model Mental Health Program;
 - \$100,000 for PROMESA, Inc.;
 - \$100,000 for Camelot of Staten Island, Inc.;
 - \$100,000 for Cazenovia Recovery Systems, Inc.;
 - \$100,000 for Dynamic Youth Community, Inc.;
 - \$100,000 for Helio Health, Inc.;
 - \$100,000 for Horizon Village, Inc.;
 - \$100,000 for New York Therapeutic Communities, Inc.;
 - \$100,000 for Odyssey House, Inc.;
 - \$100,000 for Outreach Development Corporation;
 - \$100,000 for Phoenix House of New York, Inc.; and
 - \$100,000 for St. Joseph's Rehabilitation Center, Inc.

III. SIGNIFICANT LEGISLATION

The Committee is dedicated to supporting legislation that will help ensure the highest quality of care for people living with substance use and/or gambling disorder. In the 2025 legislative session, the Committee developed and advanced important pieces of legislation which included:

1. Recovery Ready Workplace Act

A.521 (Steck)/ S.3740-A (Fernandez); Passed both Houses

Recovery Ready Workplace (RRW) initiatives have been initiated around the country as an important intervention in the opioid/substance use disorder (OUD/SUD) crisis. The goal of RRW programs is to provide outreach, training, and certification to employers in cooperation with government officials, workers, labor unions, and communities to: 1) prevent initiation of new cases of misuse and addiction, 2) provide a pathway to treatment, recovery, and support for workers who are struggling, and 3) provide healthy gainful employment for workers in recovery.

This bill would establish a program under OASAS, in consultation with the Department of Labor, by which employers may become "Recovery Ready Workplace" participants to encourage employers to make workplace policies and procedures that establish a healthier work environment and reduce occupational injuries and stress, encourage hiring of qualified people in recovery, eliminate barriers for employees seeking treatment, and to assist employees to maintain recovery.

2. Expanding Transparency on the Opioid Settlement Funds and the Opioid Stewardship Fund

A.253 (Steck)/S.670 (Jackson); Reported to Ways and Means

Currently, there is no accounting on the revenue stream of the opioid stewardship fund. This legislation would provide a basic financial report of funds disbursed in that quarter, including the names of the recipients, amounts awarded, and the date the funds are received by the recipients.

This bill would require relevant commissioners to submit a quarterly report to the Temporary President of the Senate, the Speaker of the Assembly, and the chairs of the Senate and Assembly Committees on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse, that shall include, but not be limited to, the amount of the funds currently held in the opioid stewardship fund, the amounts disbursed that quarter, the names addresses, and amounts awarded to the recipients, and the names, addresses, and the amounts received by the recipients, for such quarter. Such quarterly reports shall be compiled with previously submitted quarterly reports.

A.504 (Steck)/ S.6290 (Sanders); Reported to Ways and Means

In 2023, \$200 million of the Opioid Settlement Fund was appropriated for purposes as outlined by the Opioid Settlement Board. The first report on how these funds are being spent came out in 2023 but it does not reflect if an awardee had received the funding. To ensure that the board and the chairs are kept abreast of how these funds are being spent, more frequent reporting is necessary. This legislation would provide for a basic financial report of funds disbursed in that quarter, including the names of the recipients, amounts awarded, and the date the funds are received by the recipients.

A.8459 (Solages)/ S.6757 (Fernandez); Chapter 425

In January of 2025, New York agreed to a \$7.5 billion settlement with Purdue Pharma Inc. and the Sackler family (who owned Purdue) to resolve an ongoing lawsuit over their role in the opioid epidemic.

This law ensures that money the state is entitled to specifically from the Sackler Family Trust as part of the settlement can be placed into the Opioid Settlement Fund and that no other state or local government entity can pursue a claim against the Sackler Family Trust, in accordance with existing law. This law ensures that billions of dollars from the opioid settlement money are used for addiction treatment, prevention, and recovery efforts.

3. OASAS Aid to Local Providers

A.1269 (Steck)/ No Same As; Reported to Ways and Means

Currently, OASAS provides state aid to providers based on a reimbursement model that allows up to one hundred of the approved net operating costs of such programs. Providers who experience a decrease in individual intake see a decrease in funding for the following year. This model is antiquated and penalizes providers who have been forced to lower intake to adhere to changing COVID regulations and have struggled to retain adequate staff to operate at pre-COVID levels.

This bill would allow OASAS to provide state aid to programs operated by local government units or voluntary agencies based on a payment for services model developed by the office.

4. Expanding Access to Opioid Reversal Agents

A.265 (Steck)/ S.4150 (Harckham); Passed Assembly

This bill would require the Department of Health to make all FDA approved opioid reversal agents readily available. Currently, formulations are limited to naloxone or other

medications approved by the Department of Health. This would expand the variety of reversal agents available to purchasers, such as community organizations, pharmacies, medical facilities, hospitals, municipalities, etc. to expand access and choice in reversal agents.

A.1084 (Steck)/ No Same As; Reported to Ways and Means

This bill would establish a fentanyl test strip program within OASAS, to require any OASAS approved treatment facility routinely accessed by individuals with substance use disorder, to provide fentanyl test strips free of charge. Additionally, the bill provides that individuals in possession of test strips would not be targeted by law enforcement.

Test strips would be provided free of charge and be distributed at hospital emergency rooms, addiction treatment facilities, facilities for substance use disorder programs, homeless shelters, urgent care centers, mobile medication units, and any other OASAS approved treatment facility routinely accessed by individuals with substance use disorder. OASAS and DOH commissioners are also required to develop a public awareness campaign on the dangers of fentanyl, where fentanyl and xylazine can be found, and sites where the free test strips are available.

A.5840 (Steck)/ No Same As; Reported to Rules

Under current law, hospitals or substance use treatment facilities are recommended to inform an individual upon discharge of the availability of opioid reversal drugs and have the option to prescribe them to a patient.

This legislation would require a hospital or substance use treatment facility to prescribe or dispense at least two doses of opioid reversal drugs to a patient upon discharge. This legislation is intended to increase access to lifesaving opioid reversal drugs to those who are at risk for substance use disorder.

5. Updating Stigmatizing Language

A.2398 (Gallagher) / S.1814 (Fernandez), Chapter 511

The harsh and pejorative term "addict" was entered into New York's laws in 1972 to refer to people suffering primarily from opioid use disorder as an epidemic of heroin dependence swept through poor communities across the United States. While we also pursue legislation to provide medical resources and assistance to people suffering from substance use disorder, fight pharmaceutical corporations that profit from manufacturing addiction to opiates, and eliminate the harsh criminal penalties for people suffering from

substance use disorder, we should also update the outdated and punitive terminology of our laws.

This bill would replace the words "addict" and "addicts" with "person with substance use disorder" in various sections of law. The intent of this bill is to replace stigmatizing language. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, Substance Use Disorder is the most appropriate term.

IV: 2025 PUBLIC HEARINGS

Prevalence of Synthetic Opioid Adulterants in New York State

Tuesday, June 3rd, 2025, Albany, NY

The Committee heard testimony from a wide array of experts to share their recommendations on how New York State can address our ongoing efforts to address the issues of synthetic opioid abuse. Panels recommended that New York State increase transparency in the Opioid Settlement Fund, allow EMS providers to administer buprenorphine, expand our testing capability, and prevent the sale of harmful adulterants for illegitimate purposes.

The committee heard testimony from...

- **Dr. Robert Kent-** Former General Counsel for the Office of National Drug Control Policy and for the Office of Addiction Supports and Services (OASAS)
- **Dr. Joshua Lynch-** Associate Professor at the University at Buffalo Emergency Medicine
- **Martin Ping-** Martin lost his grandson, Avery Ping, to a product laced with opioids that he purchased over Snapchat. Chairman Steck introduced legislation to prevent what happened to Avery from happening to other New Yorkers (A8022/S8217-A)
- **Chris Assani-** Director of Policy for Friends of Recovery
- **Allegra Schorr-** President of COMPA (Coalition of Medication-Assisted Treatment Providers)
- **Jasmine Budnella-** Director of Drug Policy for VOCAL NY
- **Tonia Smith-** State Director of Drug Policy Alliance

Problem Gambling on Mobile Wagering Platforms- Joint Public Hearing, Racing and Wagering

Wednesday, October 29th, 2025, Albany, NY

Since the legalization of sports betting, we have seen a dramatic rise in gambling addiction. The committee heard testimony from professors who have studied the issue, individuals with lived experience, and representatives from organizations pursuing policy changes. Additionally, the Executive Director of the New York State Gaming Commission provided testimony outlining the legal and regulatory process a sports wagering platform must go through to operate. We are currently reviewing the testimony and will be taking legislative action based on their recommendations.

The committee heard testimony from...

- **Robert Williams-** Executive Director of the NYS Gaming Commission
- **Michelle Hadden-** Executive Director of the NYS Council on Problem Gambling
- **Robert Kent-** President of Kent Strategic Advisors
- **Brianne Doura-Schawohl,** Founder and CEO of Doura-Schawohl Consulting LLC

- **Christopher Assini**- Director of Policy for Friends of Recovery-New York
- **Lia Nower**- Professor and Director at Center for Gambling Studies, Rutgers University
- **Rachel Volberg**- Research Professor at University of Massachusetts, Amherst
- **Brett Hollenback**- Associate Professor of Marketing at UCLA Anderson School of Management

Behavioral Health Workforce – Joint Public Hearing, Mental Health

Wednesday, December 10th, 2025, New York, New York

According to a report released in August, the Office of the New York State Comptroller revealed a severe shortage of mental health practitioners in 16 rural New York Counties. The New York State Office of Mental Health and Office of Addiction Supports and Services has also reported that some programs have faced staffing vacancy rates between 30-40% and providers are facing turnover rates of over 25%. The committee heard testimony from service providers and unions representing those in the behavioral health field about the root causes of the shortage and what legislative remedies could address it. Our office is examining the testimony and will introduce legislation based on their recommendations.

The committee heard testimony from...

- **Chris Assini**- Director of Policy for Friends of Recovery, NY
- **Glenn Liebmann**- CEO of MHANYS
- **Randi DiAntonio**- Statewide Vice President of NYS Public Employees Federation
- **Joshua Terry**- Legislative Director for CSEA Local 100
- **Laura Isabelle, LCSW**- Director of Policy for the Association for Community Living
- **Alice Bufkin**- Executive Director for Data and Policy at the Citizens Committee for Children of New York
- **Allegra Schorr, MS**- President of COMPA
- **Amanda Pressly**- Policy Coordinator for NASW-NY
- **Lawrence Lang**- President of CASAC Professionals

V. APPENDIX: 2025 SUMMARY SHEET

2025 SUMMARY SHEET

SUMMARY OF ACTION ON ALL BILLS

REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON

Alcoholism and Drug Abuse

TOTAL NUMBER OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD 2

	Assembly	Senate	Total
Bill		Bills	Bills

BILLS REPORTED FAVORABLE TO:

Codes	0	0	0
Judiciary	0	0	0
Ways and Means	6	0	6
Rules	1	0	1
Floor	1	0	1
TOTAL	8	0	8

COMMITTEE ACTION

Held For Consideration	0	0	0
Defeated	0	0	0
Enacting Clause Stricken	0	0	0
REMAINING IN COMMITTEE	30	7	37

BILLS REFERENCE CHANGED TO:

WAM 2

TOTAL	2	0	2
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