



John Nygren

WISCONSIN STATE REPRESENTATIVE ★ 89TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Co-Chair, Joint Committee on Finance

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact: Rep. John Nygren

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(888) 534-0089

Representative Nygren Continued HOPE Agenda Legislation *Additional Heroin, Opiate Prevention and Education Bills Planned for Fall 2015*

Madison – Today, Representative John Nygren (R- Marinette) announced his plans to expand upon the successes of the HOPE Agenda and author legislation that will help combat prescription drug abuse, often seen as the root of Wisconsin’s heroin epidemic.

“Last year, I authored a package of seven bills aimed at combating our state’s heroin epidemic. I called this package the Heroin, Opiate Prevention and Education (HOPE) Agenda. With unanimous bipartisan support, my colleagues and I laid a foundation to fight heroin and opiate addiction in Wisconsin.

“This session, I want to address the root of our state’s heroin problem. It is for this reason that I am authoring four bills that are aimed at fighting prescription medication abuse. Many people aren’t aware that, in many cases, heroin addiction begins with addiction to prescription medications. Whether these medications are obtained legally or not, we need to do our best to curtail the illegal use of these dangerous substances.

“The goal of these pieces of legislation is not to prevent people from getting the medications that they need. I have consulted many medical professionals while drafting these bills, and I understand that there are legitimate uses for opiate pain killers. With this legislation, however, we will be able to help reduce instances of drug abuse like doctor shopping and pill mills.

The following is a short summary of each of the four HOPE Agenda bills that will be circulated for co-sponsorship this session:

1. Change the requirement for those who dispense certain prescription drugs to submit information to the prescription drug monitoring program (PDMP) from 7 days to 24 hours. It will also require a practitioner to review a patient’s record when initially prescribing a monitored prescription drug.
2. A law enforcement officer must report to the prescribing physician and the PDMP when a prescription medicine container is found in the vicinity of a crime scene that involved a controlled-substance violation or an opioid-related drug overdose. There are exceptions for on-going investigations.



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3. Give the Department of Health Services (DHS) oversight over the operation of pain management clinics across the state. The department's oversight would not be regulatory, but would be a way of providing safeguards so pill mills don't pop up in our state.
4. Methadone is a drug assisted treatment run in methadone clinics around the state. It is not uncommon for a patient to regularly go for treatment at a methadone clinic for 5 to 10 years. These clinics are for-profit and receive Medicaid reimbursement. This legislation will have methadone clinics gather data such as staffing ratios, the number of patients receiving behavioral health services with the medication, and average mileage an individual is traveling to come to a clinic. It will then be reported to DHS on an annual basis to give public health and treatment professionals a chance to analyze outcome data.

“I look forward to continuing to work with the medical community, law enforcement, the Attorney General, my colleagues in the legislature, and all of the advocates who do so much to help support those affected by addiction,” Nygren added. “The HOPE Agenda is not a silver bullet solution to this statewide drug epidemic, but I am proud that we are continuing to take steps in the right direction.”

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