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Embargoed Release:

Sunday, April 22, 2018

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Part II of Four-Part Siena College Poll: Who is Responsible for this Crisis?

Conducted as part of the Prescription for Progress*

Most Responsible for Opioid Abuse: MD's Over-prescribing, Moral Failings & Pharma Promoting Without Warning

67% Say NYS Govt. Entities Not Doing as Much as They Can

Support for Funding Treatment, Addressing Root Causes, Education, Going after Those Responsible & Empowering Law Enforcement

Loudonville, NY. Doctors over-prescribing opioids is cited most often as the single most responsible contributor to the current level of opioid abuse according to Part II of a new Siena College (SCRI) poll of New Yorkers.

Two-thirds of New Yorkers say that governmental entities across the state are not doing as much as they can to address opioid abuse. Asked to allocate 100 percent of the money available in New York to address the opioid crisis, the public would use 25 percent on funding treatment and rehabilitation, 22 percent for addressing the root causes, 19 percent on public education and awareness, 18 percent to address those responsible through litigation and regulation and 16 percent to empower the criminal justice system to address the problem.

Asked to what extent each of nine different groups or social processes are responsible for the current level of opioid abuse, over 80 percent think that allowing patients access to too many pain pills, doctors over-prescribing opioids and pharmaceutical companies promoting legal drugs without fully warning about risks, are either somewhat or very responsible. Over 70 percent also cite insufficient governmental regulation, the moral failings of individuals, lack of public awareness, increasing societal pressures like economic problems and insufficient attention paid by federal law enforcement.

The survey is part of a community effort by **Prescription for Progress: United against opioid addiction**, a newly formed coalition of leaders in healthcare, media, law enforcement, education and business in New York's Capital Region committed to raising awareness and taking positive steps to address the crisis.

Prescription for Progress seeks to unite businesses, nonprofits and government agencies to strive toward the shared goal of fighting addiction. The initiative will include town hall meetings, public service messages in local media and gatherings of stakeholders to identify positive steps. An upcoming survey by SCRI, also commissioned by **Prescription for Progress**, will poll professionals working to address opioid abuse.

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“With no ambiguity about opioid abuse being a public health crisis, New Yorkers hold many groups responsible for the current epidemic,” said Siena College Research Institute Director, Don Levy. “At the top of the list is doctors that over-prescribe, individuals’ moral failings and those that promoted opioids as safe and effective.”

“Two-thirds of all New Yorkers and seventy percent of those that have been touched by opioid abuse say that state government is not doing as much as they can to address the crisis,” Levy said.

New Yorkers support governmental entities to: incorporate more drug abuse prevention programs in schools (85 percent), allocate more funding for treatment and rehabilitation (83 percent), provide funding to educate the general public (83 percent), work to facilitate easier communication between law enforcement, medical institutions, treatment facilities and insurance providers (82 percent), provide more funding to law enforcement (79 percent), and increase the severity of sentences for those convicted for trafficking (77 percent).

“What should we do? Given the chance to divide up the pie of dollars available to address the opioid crisis, New Yorkers would like the greatest amount, twenty-five cents of every dollar to go to treatment and rehabilitation with another twenty-two cents earmarked to address the root causes of addiction that could include mental illness, poverty or other social pressures. But the public also clearly calls for close to twenty cents of every dollar going to: holding those responsible to account, public awareness and equipping the criminal justice system to address the problem,” Levy said.

In the coming weeks, the Siena College Research Institute (SCRI) will release two additional chapters of data drawn from this survey of nearly 1400 New Yorkers.

Part III: What happens at the doctor? Can we access treatment?

Part IV: What do we believe about opioid abuse? What initiatives do we support?

All **Prescription for Progress** data for this and future surveys will be made available to journalism outlets, research organizations and other stakeholders in New York State.

To learn more about the **Prescription for Progress** coalition, including how your organization can participate, please contact Patti Hart, pahart@timesunion.com or 518-454-5067. Or sign up here: www.RXforprogress.com

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This Siena College Poll was conducted online February 8-14, 2018 through a proprietary panel developed by Lucid: <https://lucid.com> of 1384 New York State residents age 18 and older in English. It has an overall margin of error of ± 3.0 percentage points including the design effects resulting from weighting. Data was statistically adjusted by age, region, and gender to ensure representativeness. The Siena College Research Institute, directed by Donald Levy, Ph.D., conducts political, economic, social and cultural research primarily in NYS. SCRI, an independent, non-partisan research institute, subscribes to the American Association of Public Opinion Research Code of Professional Ethics and Practices. For more information, call Don Levy at (518) 783-2901. For survey cross-tabs: www.Siena.edu/SCRI.