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Special Siena College Poll: How do Stakeholders See the Opioid Epidemic
Conducted as part of the Prescription for Progress*

88% of Professionals Say Opioid Crisis Has Gotten Worse; 51% Believe Worst is Yet to Come

Call for More Funding for Treatment; Say Patients Need More Time in Rehab and More Follow-Up

Majorities Say Neither Legislature nor Medical Providers Effective in Combatting Opioid Abuse

Loudonville, NY. Eighty-eight percent of Capital District professionals working to address the opioid crisis in mental health, social services, medical fields, law enforcement and education say that the opioid crisis has gotten worse over the past few years in a new Siena College Research Institute (SCRI) poll of 612 respondents. Over half say that given what they know about the measures we have already taken to address the epidemic, they think it will get worse in the future. While 54 percent of the general public have been personally touched by the opioid epidemic, among professionals, 87 percent have themselves or have a family member, friend or someone their organization serves that has suffered from opioid abuse.

Nearly three quarters of Capital Region professionals say that governmental entities are not doing enough to address opioid abuse. Ninety-four percent call for increased funding for treatment and after considering four other strategies to address opioid abuse, these professionals would allocate 37 percent of all funding to treatment, 22 percent to addressing root causes, 17 percent to education and awareness, 12 percent to enforcement and 12 percent to litigation and regulation. Sixty percent cite patients not being in treatment long enough and 55 percent cite poor follow-up as barriers to treatment. Fifty-five percent say the average person should be in treatment at least 6 months as 73 percent say that insurance does not cover the cost of enough treatment.

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.

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Fifty-nine percent say that most treatment programs are at least somewhat effective in getting participants to overcome their opioid addiction. While nearly a quarter don't know, among those with an opinion, law enforcement breaks even with 38 percent saying they are effective in restricting the supply of illegal opioids from being present in the Capital Region and 40 percent saying that they are not effective. But a majority of professionals, 51 percent, say that our legislative leaders are not very or not at all effective in providing support to our community in an effort to combat addiction and 58 percent say that the medical field is not effective in combatting the epidemic.

“These professionals offer a strong critique of the medical field,” said Siena College Research Institute Director, Don Levy. “More than two-thirds, in fact, even higher percentages of those in medicine say that the medical field is doing no better than a fair or poor job of informing patients of the risks of using opioids, appropriately prescribing the medications, becoming trained in treating patients addicted to opioids or treating patients that are addicted.

“What should we do? Most of these professionals want to hold drug companies financially responsible for the crisis, treat addiction like a disease and strengthen prescription monitoring. They support making Narcan more available and improving access to methadone as well as increasing support for needle exchange programs,” Levy said. “Seventy-three percent even support allowing doctors to order involuntary treatment for opioid addiction in cases in which the doctor believes the patient's life may be at risk.

“Clearly this crisis, that is touching the lives of a majority of New Yorkers, demands not only all hands on deck, but also, collaborative efforts across law enforcement, treatment, medical professionals, community leaders, elected officials and all concerned citizens to address this problem from every direction,” Levy said.

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 April 10-May 4, 2018 through an invited sample of 612 Capital Region professionals from the fields of mental health, social services, medicine, law enforcement, and education. It has an overall margin of error of ± 4.0 percentage points. 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.