



Mental Health and Recovery Services Board

1200 North State Route 53 • Tiffin, Ohio 44883-9799 • Tel.: 419-448-0640 • Fax: 419-448-8743

PRESS RELEASE

August 17, 2017

Contact: Mircea Handru

Phone: 419-448-0640

Continuing the Fight

written by Mircea Handru, MBA

Our society continues to seek fast answers to the current drug epidemic, which is killing more and more people in the state of Ohio. But, the current epidemic didn't appear overnight and I believe it will take some time to see a consistent decrease in overdose deaths and drug-addicted individuals. Initiatives to combat this problem are happening constantly in Ohio, sometimes maybe too fast, which often helps with one issue but creates two more. One example is the Good Samaritan Law. I will elaborate more on the Good Samaritan Law and its effectiveness in our communities in an upcoming letter.

According to a recent article from New York Times, dentists and oral surgeons are by far the major prescribers of opioids for people ages 10-19. According to the American Dental Association survey, 85 percent of individuals who had wisdom teeth extraction received a prescription for opioids. This leads to another initiative in Ohio, called Daniel's Law or S.B. 119. I was fortunate to be part of some of the discussions with individuals drafting the law, including Scott Weidle, Daniel's father. Daniel died in 2015 in Ohio due to a drug overdose.

The main focus of Daniel's Law is to impact Primary Care physicians and general dentists, who prescribe 50 percent of all opioids in Ohio. The law will not allow a physician in a primary care setting to prescribe more than a three-day supply of opioids. If a physician in the primary care setting desires to have authority to prescribe more than a three-day supply, up to seven days, they will need eight hours of opioid training and offer opioid addiction treatment. The goal of this law, according to Scott Weidle, is to reduce unnecessary over-exposure to medical opioids and increase additional treatment doors. The other area of Daniel's Law is mandating facilities that offer addictive Medication Assisted Treatment to also offer non-addictive Medication Assisted Treatment. For example, a facility that offers suboxone treatment will be mandated to also offer naltrexone (Vivitrol) treatment, as naltrexone is categorized as a non-addictive medication. Also, this law will add naltrexone to the drugs monitored by the State Board of Pharmacy. There is a high probability that this law, if passed, will receive criticism from individuals with chronic pain, from existing Medication Assisted Treatment providers, and from physicians. We will monitor the progress of this proposed law.

###