

NJAMHAA Highlights Successful Treatment at Event on Rx Drug Abuse Prevention Bill

Congressman Pallone (D-6th District) recently announced his introduction of the Medicare Prescription Drug Integrity Act of 2013. The Partnership for a Drug-Free New Jersey and NJAMHAA were invited to speak at the event. Angelo M. Valente, Executive Director of the Partnership, elaborated on the statistics of prescription drug misuse and abuse among all age groups and across the nation -- numbers that clearly show this is an epidemic.

For example, a study in the *Annals of Epidemiology* estimated that by 2020, nearly 2.7 million individuals age 50 and older will be abusing prescription drugs; this would be a 190 percent increase from 2001. In addition, in 2010, about 12 million Americans age 12 and older reported that they took prescription painkillers for nonmedical uses during the past year and in 2009, approximately 1 million emergency room visits could be attributed to prescription drug abuse, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Drug Abuse Warning Network, respectively.

"These statistics are quite striking. I am here to share equally compelling stories, but with a positive aspect: examples of successful treatment," said Shauna Moses, NJAMHAA's Associate Executive Director. She shared two examples - from [Community Care Behavioral Health](#) and [New Hope Foundation](#), which are in Congressman Pallone's district -- of individuals' success in treatment for substance use disorders and other successes that became possible as a result

"These are just two of many examples of individuals from diverse backgrounds and age groups who have been empowered to transform their lives through the treatment and support services they receive," Moses said.

Click [here](#) to see a clip of the event. NJAMHAA thanks the Partnership for a Drug-Free New Jersey for creating this video.

"At NJAMHAA, our mission is to ensure access to services, which clearly work. We are proud to have a diverse membership offering a full continuum of services that enable individuals to live healthy, rewarding and productive lives. And we greatly appreciate legislative and policy initiatives in our state and federal governments that help make this possible," Moses said.

Congressman Pallone, the Ranking Member of the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health, wrote his bill to address the issue of Medicare paying for 30,000 prescriptions for controlled substances that were prescribed by unauthorized individuals. This issue was reported by a recent report from the Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General, "which also states that of these prescriptions, more than 7,000 were narcotics, such as oxycodone, which have the highest potential for abuse and can be diverted and resold for profit," as explained in a press release issued by Congressman Pallone's office.

"Prescription drug abuse is an epidemic, and in New Jersey, it is on the rise. Millions of Americans benefit from Medicare's drug coverage program each year, which is why it's imperative that checks are in place to prevent fraud and abuse as well as to protect patients. We cannot allow Medicare's prescription drug program to be compromised at taxpayer expense. My bill, the Medicare Prescription Drug Integrity Act of 2013, will strengthen the Medicare law to help address potential factors contributing to prescription drug abuse," Congressman Pallone said. Click [here](#) for details on this bill.