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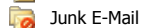
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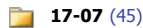
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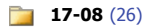
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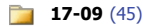

16-12 Grants Committee



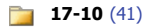
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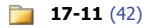
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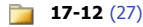
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For Immediate Release - Senator Joyce Waddell's New Opioid Prescription Limits Effective January 1

Jyrta Moore (Sen. Joyce Waddell) [Waddelljla@ncleg.net]

Sent: Monday, January 01, 2018 10:56 AM


 From the Office of Sen. Joyce Waddell, NC Senate
 Mecklenburg County


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, January 1, 2018

CONTACT: Sen. Joyce Waddell

(919) 733-5650

Joyce.Waddell@ncleg.net

New Opioid Prescription Limits Effective January 1

Charlotte, NC – Last year, state lawmakers passed House Bill 243, Strengthen Opioid Misuse Prevention (STOP) Act, to help fight against opioid abuse in North Carolina. There will be a new limit on the quantity of drugs patients can receive at their first doctor's visit. In about half of opioid-related deaths, victims overdose on the same prescription originally prescribed by a doctor. In Mecklenburg County, opioid-related deaths have increased by 134 percent, from 26 in 2005 to 61 in 2015; the second-highest in the state. An average of three people die every day from opioid overdoses in the state. According to the Department of Health and Human Services, overdose deaths spiked 800 percent across the state in the last year. In 2016, pharmacies distributed 675 million opioid pills in North Carolina.

Beginning January 1, doctors may prescribe a five-day supply of opioids for acute pain, such as a muscle injury or broken bones. Doctors may refill the prescription at their discretion. In the case of a surgical procedure, doctors may prescribe a one-week prescription for opioids. The new limits will not affect patients that suffer from severe chronic pain or long-term injuries, including those in hospice care. The law aims to reduce the probability of patients becoming addicted to opioids and prevent the supply being distributed to people who may not need them. Doctors and pharmacists must report all prescriptions to a statewide prescription database which allow medical professionals to keep track of a patient's opioid prescription history.

"The STOP Act is an important measure to combat the opioid epidemic. It is a great step towards protecting vulnerable populations from opioid abuse; and we need to focus on additional protective actions in the 2018 short session. I will continue to support measures that will protect the health and safety of our citizens," said Senator Joyce Waddell.

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