



# MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: MAY 2, 2018**

**Re: S.5949 (Akshar)/A.8523 (Rosenthal) – An act to amend the public health law, in relation to prescribing opioids to a minor.**

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The New York Health Plan Association (HPA) supports S.5949/A.8523, which would require informed consent of the child’s parent, guardian, or other authorized adult of the dangers of taking a controlled substance containing an opioid, and that the child be provided information regarding the increased risk of addiction.

HPA fully supports this legislation as part of the ongoing effort to help address the ravages of the opioid epidemic on our young adults. Far too often the story is told of how a young adult became addicted to opioids as the result of prescription pain medications. This problem is underscored by the finding of a new Siena College poll that found of the nearly one in four New Yorkers that have been prescribed opioids for pain, only half were warned by their doctor about the risk of addiction.

This bill would require a health practitioner to receive written consent from a minor’s parent or legal guardian in order to prescribe a medical treatment containing opioids, as well as to discuss the risks of addiction and dangers of overdose associated with the medication. The bill also limits the prescription for a controlled substance containing an opioid to a seven-day duration unless there is a medical emergency that puts the child’s health or safety at risk.

By discussing these issues up front and getting all parties to put their consent in writing, this legislation will go a long way in addressing the increasing risk of children becoming addicted to opioids, and then often heroin or other drugs, after being prescribed pain medication for medical procedures.

For these reasons, HPA supports S.5949/A.8523.

*The New York Health Plan Association represents 29 managed care health plans that provide comprehensive health care services to more than 8 million New Yorkers.*