

SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE

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PRESS RELEASE

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**LEGISLATOR STEVE STERN LEADS FIGHT AGAINST DRUG
EPIDEMIC IN SUFFOLK COUNTY**

Legislation to Prohibit Sale of Lethal Synthetic Opioid U-47700 Passes Unanimously

HUNTINGTON, NY—Legislator Steve Stern’s (D-Huntington, 16th LD) bill to prohibit the sale and possession of U-47700, passed unanimously at the October General Meeting of the Legislature. U-47700 is a powerful, highly addictive synthetic opioid drug that has been linked to more than 50 deaths, including the recent death of music legend Prince. Autopsy results following Prince’s death in April found the drug in the late singer’s system, part of a deadly narcotic mix that included Fentanyl. U-47700 is particularly lethal because it is resistant to treatment with Narcan, which is used to revive patients who have overdosed.

This legislation is one part of a concerted effort between all branches of Suffolk County government, drug education and rehabilitation agencies and members of our community to combat the heroin and opioid epidemic that continues to cause death and devastation for Suffolk County families.

U-47700 was originally developed by the pharmaceutical industry as an alternative to morphine but was never marketed when it was determined to be more than eight times as potent as morphine. The drug is manufactured overseas and sold on the internet. It can be smoked, snorted or orally ingested and can cause respiratory depression, coma, permanent brain damage

and death. Because the drug is unclassified, and may not be tested for in toxicology reports, overdoses and deaths are largely unreported. It has been banned in Georgia, Ohio, and Wyoming, as well as Sweden. The legislation to prohibit its sale was supported by Health Commissioner James Tomarken and Police Commissioner Tim Sini.

Suffolk County has seen a tremendous increase in heroin and opiate addiction that has devastated thousands of families, and strained law enforcement resources. “We must do everything in our power to protect our young people from synthetic opioids like U-47700 that we know lead to addiction, serious health effects, graduation to heroin and potential death,” Legislator Stern said. “I thank my colleagues on the Legislature for joining me in taking meaningful action to protect the health and safety of our communities.”