

Committee on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse

Sheldon Silver, Speaker • Steven Cymbrowitz, Chair

Fall 2011

Message from the Chair



Dear Friends:

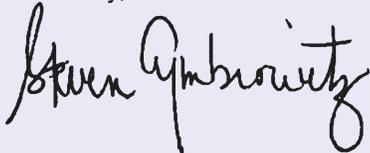
I am honored to have been appointed Chairman of the Assembly Committee on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse by Speaker Sheldon Silver. This important leadership position gives me a unique opportunity to tackle a problem that impacts the lives of countless people around the State. In this new role, I have already conducted numerous visits to service providers across the state; held meetings with stakeholders in the field of addiction; and convened hearings and roundtables on behalf of the Committee. My experiences over the last few months have taught me that prevention and treatment programs for chemical dependence and problem gambling more than pay for themselves when you account for lives saved and the inherent benefit of creating productive, taxpaying citizens. Even in the face of tough economic times, we must recognize the value of, and invest in, programs that have proven to be effective in reducing alcohol, substance abuse and problem gambling, as well as evidence-based prevention programs that aim to reduce the risk of individuals engaging in addictive behaviors.

This year's budget was a difficult one. With New York State facing a multi-billion dollar deficit, many substance abuse and gambling prevention and treatment providers experienced a reduction in state allocated resources. As Chairman of the Committee, I will advocate strongly that prevention, treatment, and recovery services be made available for all of our State's citizens who are struggling with addiction, as well as for their families.

Legislatively, the Committee had a productive session, acting on several important pieces of legislation, including two bills that were signed by the Governor. One bill promotes the screening, assessment, and diagnosis of women for alcoholism and chemical dependency. The second bill will help New York State respond to the national trend of increased drug abuse among youth 12 years of age and older.

I look forward to working with all of you, including the Speaker of the Assembly, members of the Committee, my Assembly colleagues, the chemical dependence and problem gambling prevention, treatment, and recovery communities, and other stakeholders, to improve the lives of New Yorkers through a comprehensive and efficient system of addiction services.

Sincerely,



Steven H. Cymbrowitz, Chair



Executive Director of SAFE, Ike Dweck, making a point during a tour of the SAFE building as (L-R) Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) Commissioner Arlene González-Sánchez, Assemblyman Steven Cymbrowitz and Patricia Zuber-Wilson, OASAS' Director of Government Affairs, look on. Assemblyman Cymbrowitz wanted the commissioner to see how this community-founded and funded organization makes a positive difference in the lives of community residents addicted to drugs, alcohol or compulsive gambling. SAFE provides outpatient treatment services and prevention programming to private schools reaching 3,000 students in addition to programs for residents from the entire community. Its philosophy is to treat both the recovering individual and their families. SAFE is also Brooklyn's only program with a gambling component.

Assemblyman Cymbrowitz Speaks at the Coalition for Community Services Legislative Reception

Assemblyman Cymbrowitz was honored to address the members of the Coalition for Community Services, which has been serving the communities of Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island, Fallsburg, and Western New York for over 30 years. It provided an opportunity for young people and adults to share their personal stories of treatment

and recovery and be recognized for their successes in addressing their issues with addiction. Other speakers included Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver and the Commissioner of the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS), Arlene González-Sánchez.

Assembly Roundtable Highlights Prescription Drug Abuse

According to the findings of the 2009 National Survey on Drug Use and Health compiled by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, prescription opiate abuse is the nation's fastest growing drug problem. The findings reveal that nearly one-third of individuals aged 12 and over who used drugs for the first time in 2009 began by using a prescription drug non-medically.

On August 9th, 2011, the Committee on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse convened a roundtable discussion on opiate abuse among adolescents and young adults. The panel of participants included substance abuse prevention and treatment professionals, state officials and law enforcement personnel from across the state.

The roundtable discussion highlighted such issues as offering continuing medical education (CME) programming for physicians and other healthcare providers on prescription drug abuse, increasing the awareness of parents, adolescents and young adults concerning the dangers of prescription drug abuse, and the proper disposal of unused prescription opioids. Panelists also voiced concern regarding barriers to treatment, such as the inability of many families to meet the insurance co-payment required for their children to receive long term drug treatment and the reluctance of some schools to refer their students to treatment.



Dr. Richard Kipnis, Medical Director for the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS), makes a statement at the Roundtable on Prescription Abuse among Adolescents and Young Adults. Assemblyman Steven Cymbrowitz and other members of the panel listen to his remarks.

Public Hearing on Underage Alcohol Consumption

According to the Youth Development Survey (YDS) conducted by the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS), it is estimated that over 900,000 underage youth statewide consume alcohol each year and one out of every three 13 year-olds in New York State has tried alcohol. In 2007, underage drinking cost New York State \$3.5 billion due to work loss, medical care and other problems associated with the use of alcohol by youth. Further, it has been reported that in 2007, underage drinking represented 17 percent of all alcohol purchased in New York State, totaling over \$2 billion dollars.

On Wednesday, May 25th, 2011, the Assembly Committee on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse held a public hearing on the prevention of underage alcohol consumption. This hearing provided a forum to explore the effectiveness of New York State's prevention strategies, as well as to examine the impact that public policy and other legislative

proposals have had on access to alcohol and underage drinking.

Witnesses providing testimony included the Commissioner of the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS), law enforcement officials, alcohol and substance abuse prevention and treatment providers, and other health and mental hygiene officials. The Committee heard testimony that called for further development of collaborative relationships among alcohol and substance abuse providers, State agencies, and local prevention and law enforcement agencies. It was also noted that more needs to be done in the media to counteract the heavy influence alcohol advertising has on motivating youth to begin drinking at an early age. Some witnesses raised concern that resources for prevention services continue to be decreased. Effective prevention programs need to be funded appropriately in order to work towards reducing underage alcohol consumption.



Members of the Assembly Committee on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse including Chairman Steven Cymbrowitz, Assemblymember Michael DenDekker, Assemblymember Marcos Crespo, Assemblymember Eric Stevenson, and Assemblymember Felix Ortiz, former Chairman of the Committee and current Chairman of the Assembly Committee on Mental Health, comprised the panel that heard testimony from treatment and prevention service providers and agencies statewide on the issue of underage alcohol consumption.

The Committee Explores the Impact of Problem and Compulsive Gambling

Problem gambling affects nearly one million adult and adolescent New Yorkers. A study by the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) found that 5 percent of adults or 668,000 individuals exhibited problem gambling behaviors within the past year. Additionally, a survey of 7th through 12th graders found that 10 percent, or 140,000 of these students, experienced problem gambling in the past 12 months.

The Assembly Committee on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse, along with Assembly Committee on Racing and Wagering Chairman J. Gary Pretlow, invited experts on the prevention of problem gambling to explore the most effective way to deliver prevention and treatment services for problem gambling.

The Committees will work with the prevention community and all stakeholders, including colleagues in the Assembly, to raise awareness of the consequences of problem gambling, monitor the expansion of gambling opportunities in New York State and encourage the introduction of an initiative that will dedicate a percentage of new gambling revenue to the prevention and treatment of problem and compulsive gambling.



Assemblyman Steven Cymbrowitz makes a point while presiding over the roundtable on the impact of problem gambling held in Albany.

Assembly Committee on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Advanced Significant Legislation in the 2011 Session

Youth Substance Abuse (A.6815/S.4846; Chapter 283)

Renames the “Advisory Council on Underage Alcohol Consumption” to the “Advisory Council on Underage Alcohol Consumption and Youth Substance Abuse.” This bill expands the Council’s focus to respond to the national trend of increased drug abuse among youth 12 years of age and older.

Care for Women Suffering from Alcoholism (A.1078/S.3279; Chapter 265)

Requires the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS), in consultation with the Department of Health (DOH), to provide and publish educational materials for health care providers regarding the screening, assessment, and diagnosis of women for alcoholism and chemical dependency.

Enhanced Expertise of OASAS Advisory Council (A.2059/S.3251; Passed Both Houses)

Increases representation on the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) Advisory Council to include representatives of dual diagnosis programs and consumers who have received services from such programs.

Expansion of SBIRT (A.7804; Passed Assembly)

Expands the Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) program beyond hospital emergency rooms to primary health care settings, and requires the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) to develop SBIRT training materials for health care providers and qualified health professionals.

Patient Rights Notification (A.48; Passed Assembly)

Requires that patients, who are undergoing treatment for chemical dependency be informed of their rights and the essential protections they are entitled to under the law. Some of these rights and protections include: being fully informed of the proposed

treatment, including its adverse effects; having confidentiality in treatment and access to personal and treatment records; reporting grievances regarding services to any staff of the facility; and the right to civil and religious liberties.

Raise Awareness of Prescription Drug Abuse (A.7805)

Requires the Commissioner of the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) in consultation with the Commissioner of the Department of Health (DOH) to develop a prescription drug awareness campaign regarding the dangers of misuse and abuse of prescription drugs. This bill has been referred to the Ways and Means Committee.



Chairman Steven Cymbrowitz along with the members of the Assembly Committee on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse welcomed Arlene González-Sánchez, the Commissioner of the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS), to participate in a Committee meeting. Other Committee members pictured include Assemblymember Michael G. DenDekker, Assemblymember Linda B. Rosenthal, Assemblymember Crystal D. Peoples-Stokes, Assemblymember Andrew D. Hevesi, Assemblymember Inez D. Barron and Assemblymember Marcos A. Crespo.

Assemblyman Cymbrowitz Visits Albany Stratton VA Medical Center

Assemblyman Steven Cymbrowitz, Chairman of the Assembly Committee on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse, visited the Stratton VA Medical Center, which opened in 1951, and serves veterans in 22 counties of upstate New York, western Massachusetts and Vermont. Of the nearly one million veterans living in

New York State, many of them have been exposed to or have experienced trauma, placing them at high risk for triggering underlying conditions, such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), substance abuse problems or other mental health issues.

Finger Lakes Consortium of Alcohol and Substance Services Welcomes Chairman Steven Cymbrowitz

Committee on Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Chairman Steven Cymbrowitz visited Western New York where he delivered a keynote address to the Region II Consortium of Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services at their Annual Legislative Breakfast. He was joined by Arlene González-Sánchez, Commissioner of the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS). They

participated in a State Legislators’ panel presentation, and received a briefing on federal health care reform. Assemblyman Cymbrowitz also visited Rochester’s East House Corporation’s Women’s Community Residence Program and the Employment and Vocational Service site. Chairman Cymbrowitz appreciated the opportunity to address East House’s clients and also hear testimony from them.