

New York State Assembly

Annual 2024 Report

**Committee on
Alcoholism and Drug Abuse**



**Speaker Carl E. Heastie
Phil Steck, Chair**



Phillip Steck
Member of Assembly
110th District

THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

CHAIR
Committee on Alcoholism and
Drug Abuse

COMMITTEES

Health
Insurance
Judiciary
Labor
Oversight, Analysis and
Investigation

December 15, 2024

Honorable Carl E. Heastie

Speaker of the Assembly

Legislative Office Building, Room 932

Albany, NY 12248

Dear Speaker Heastie:

On behalf of the Assembly Standing Committee on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse, I respectfully submit the Committee's 2024 Annual Report. During my fourth year as Chair, I have engaged with the substance use prevention, treatment, and recovery communities by convening meetings with advocates. Additionally, I have attended and participated in numerous events that were held to highlight key initiatives and address challenges for substance use prevention, treatment, and recovery providers.

A key accomplishment of the State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2024-2025 Enacted Budget was addressing the opioid epidemic using a public health approach. As the State's opioid treatment authority, the Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS) will continue to coordinate State-federal relations in addiction services and implement a statewide harm reduction strategy, in collaboration with the Department of Health (DOH), which is designed to meet people where they are and prevent overdoses. In addition, the legislature provided funding for various local substance abuse prevention and recovery programs and provided a cost-of-living adjustment for the salaries of OASAS staff.

This Legislative session, the State has continued the distribution of funding from the Opioid Settlement Fund. In the 2025-2026 SFY, \$65.0 million will be disbursed with \$19.4 million allocated to local governments and \$45.7 million allocated for state investments. On November 1, 2024, the Opioid Advisory Board published recommendations related to harm reduction, treatment, prevention, recovery, as well as providing more funding to grassroots organizations, workforce initiatives, and care for individuals with co-occurring disorders.

In the upcoming Legislative session, the Committee will continue to examine, develop, and consider policies designed to help every New Yorker impacted by a substance use disorder or problem gambling. I am currently coordinating workshops for the committee to engage the members in continued policy development, and to showcase some of the results of our legislative efforts. I look forward to working with you and my Assembly colleagues to ensure that effective prevention, treatment, and recovery services are accessible to all individuals and families who have been affected by substance use disorder and problem gambling.

Thank you again for your continued support of the Assembly Standing Committee on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse. I look forward to a productive Legislative Session.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Phil Steck". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Phillip Steck

Chair, Assembly Committee on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse

2024 ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY
STANDING COMMITTEE ON ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG ABUSE

Phillip Steck

Chair

Committee Members

Majority

Juan Ardila
Alex Bores
Maritza Davila
Emily Gallagher
Chantel Jackson
John T. McDonald III
Karines Reyes
Al Stirpe
John Zaccaro Jr.

Minority

Alec Brook-Krasny
Keith P. Brown – Ranking Member
Scott Gray
Brian Maher

Committee Staff

Alison Lane McLean – Legislative Director

Program and Counsel Staff

Janice Nieves – Assistant Secretary for Program and Policy

Ayanna Armstrong – Legislative Analyst

Alice Bagley – Executive Secretary

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Assembly Committee on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse develops and considers legislation impacting programs that provide prevention, treatment, and recovery services for individuals and families in New York State.

The Committee has oversight of the New York State Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS) to ensure that its policies and initiatives will improve and expand access to prevention, treatment, and recovery services statewide. The Members of the Committee bring forth the concerns and ideas from their districts to create a collaborative approach to New York State substance use disorder policy.

OASAS oversees a service system that includes approximately 1,700 prevention, treatment, and recovery programs serving over 730,000 individuals per year. This includes the direct operation of 12 Addiction Treatment Centers where doctors, nurses, and clinical staff provide inpatient and residential services to approximately 8,000 individuals per year. OASAS oversees a comprehensive education and prevention program, supporting 159 school and community-based providers throughout New York.

The Office of Addiction Services and Supports provides education and training to professionals working with clients and administers a professional credentialing process for addiction professionals, including certified alcoholism and substance abuse counselors, prevention professionals and specialists and problem gambling counselors.

II. STATE BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

The Committee carefully considered funding priorities and how to effectively allocate resources. Some of the highlights from the SFY 2024-25 Enacted Budget include:

- The Legislature modifies the Executive 1.5 percent Human Services Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) by adding an additional \$115 million to support a 1.7 percent targeted salary increase to support staff, direct care staff, clinical staff, and non-executive administrative staff. The State fiscal year total cost for the Human Services agencies COLA would be \$244.4 million, including \$16.8 million for OASAS.
- The Legislature provides support for the following programs:
 - \$3 million to restore Vocational, Rehabilitation, and Job Placement Services;
 - \$2 million for Substance Abuse Prevention and Intervention Specialists (SAPIS);
 - \$1.2 million for various programs treating co-occurring substance use and mental health disorders;
 - \$950,000 for the Family and Children's Association Recovery Community and Outreach Center;
 - \$250,000 for the Addiction Recovery Supportive Transportation Services Demonstration Program;
 - \$250,000 for Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Providers of New York State;
 - \$250,000 for the Catholic Charities of Orange, Sullivan and Ulster Counties;
 - \$250,000 for the Coalition for Behavioral Health (InUnity Alliance Inc.); and
 - \$150,000 for the Samaritan Daytop Village.

III. SIGNIFICANT LEGISLATION

The Committee is dedicated to supporting legislation that will help ensure the highest quality of care for people living with a substance use and/or problem gambling disorder. In the 2024 legislative session, the Committee developed and advanced important pieces of legislation which included:

1. OASAS Aid to Local Providers

A.4438-A (Steck)/ No Same As; Reported to Ways and Means

Currently, OASAS provides state aid to providers based on a reimbursement model that allows up to one hundred of the approved net operating costs of such programs. Providers who experience a decrease in individual intake see a decrease in funding for the following year. This model is antiquated and penalizes providers who have been forced to lower intake to adhere to changing COVID regulations and have struggled to retain adequate staff to operate at pre COVID levels.

This bill would allow OASAS to provide state aid to a program operated by a local governmental unit or voluntary agency based on a payment for services model developed by the office.

2. Expanding Transparency on the Opioid Settlement Fund and the Opioid Stewardship Fund

A.5807-A (Steck)/ S.9859 (Sanders); Reported to Rules

In 2023, \$200 million of the Opioid Settlement Fund has been appropriated for purposes as outlined by the Opioid Settlement Board. The first report on how these funds are being spent came out in 2023 and they do not reflect if an awardee had received the funding. To ensure that the board and the chairs are kept abreast of how these funds are being spent, more frequent reporting is necessary.

This bill would require OASAS to submit a quarterly report to the Opioid Settlement Advisory Board and the legislature on the disbursement held in the Opioid Settlement Fund.

A.9100 (Steck)/ S.9836 (Jackson); Referred to Rules

This bill would require the OASAS to submit a quarterly report to the Opioid Settlement Board and the Legislature on the disbursement of funds held in the Opioid Stewardship Fund.

3. Contingency Management Services

A.6674-A (Carroll)/ No Same As; Reported to Ways and Means

Substance abuse is a long-term problem in New York State and across the nation, continuing to worsen over time, especially since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Contingency management (CM) is a strategy used in substance use disorder treatment that provides an incentive structure that rewards participants for specific behaviors. Studies have demonstrated that CM is an effective tool for increasing treatment retention and abstinence from drug use.

This bill would require OASAS, in consultation with the Department of Health, to establish a contingency management services program for individuals with a substance use disorder who are also eligible for Medicaid. The bill would also require contingency management services to be an eligible service under the Medicaid program.

4. Expanding Access to Opioid Reversal Agents

A.8075-D (Steck)/ S.8991A (Harckham); Referred to Rules

Opioid overdoses continue to be a critical public health concern in New York. Despite recent improvements, opioid overdose deaths are almost twice their pre-pandemic levels. In 2023, 33 out of every 100,000 New Yorkers lost their lives to drug overdoses; of that 33, 28 died specifically from opioid overdoses. A staggering rise from the 5 opioid-related deaths per 100,000 residents recorded in 2010.

This bill would require the Department of Health to make available any form or dosage of opioid reversal agents that are approved by the FDA.

5. Recovery Ready Workplace Act

A.9063-A (Steck)/ No Same As; Reported to Ways and Means

Recovery Ready Workplace (RRW) initiatives have been initiated around the country as an important intervention in the opioid/substance use disorder crisis. RRW programs provide outreach, training, and certification to employers in cooperation with government officials, workers, labor unions, and communities to 1) prevent initiation of new cases of misuse and addiction, 2) provide a pathway to treatment, recovery, and support for workers who are struggling, and 3) provide healthy gainful employment for workers in recovery.

This bill would establish a program under OASAS, in consultation with the Department of Labor, by which employers may become "Recovery Ready Workplace" participants to encourage employers to make workplace policies and procedures that establish a healthier work environment and reduce occupational injuries and stress, encourage hiring of qualified people in recovery, eliminate barriers for employees seeking treatment, and to assist employees to maintain recovery.

IV. APPENDIX: 2024 Summary Sheet

2024 SUMMARY SHEET

SUMMARY OF ACTION ON ALL BILLS

REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON

Alcoholism and Drug Abuse

TOTAL NUMBER OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD 4

ASSEMBLY SENATE TOTAL

BILLS BILLS BILLS

BILLS REPORTED FAVORABLE TO:

Codes	0	0	0
Judiciary	0	0	0
Ways and Means	7	0	7
Rules	0	0	0
Floor	0	0	0
TOTAL	7	0	7

COMMITTEE ACTION

Held For Consideration	1	0	1
Defeated	0	0	0
Enacting Clause Stricken	1	0	1
REMAINING IN COMMITTEE	23	6	29

BILLS REFERENCE CHANGED TO:

TOTAL	0	0	0
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