

Gae Magnifici: Steps forward on the road to ending drug addiction

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Over the past year, I've had the privilege of serving as the Vice-Chair of the Assembly Committee on Substance Abuse and Prevention. Northwest Wisconsin is facing an epidemic of drug addiction, and promoting legislation that addresses this issue has been one of my top priorities as a State Representative.

On Wednesday, the committee heard testimony on a package of bills authored by Rep. John Nygren that I've co-sponsored. These bills are a part of a larger bipartisan legislative effort called the Heroin, Opiate, Prevention, and Education (HOPE) Agenda. In recent years, the Agenda has been expanded to include prevention and treatment legislation for all addictions.

This package of bills includes new initiatives and renews other initiatives that have proven successful. Among these bills are Assembly Bill 646, which creates a registry of approved recovery residences. Safe housing is vital for those in recovery, and creating a registry of recovery residences will help connect the recovery community with these invaluable resources.

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Assembly Bill 647 extends Wisconsin's Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP), which is seen as the gold standard of PDMPs nationwide. By extending Wisconsin's Prescription Drug Monitoring Program, we will continue to ensure that medical professionals are cognizant to prescribe opiates only when they are absolutely necessary.

Assembly Bill 650 provides low-income Wisconsinites with access to recovery

coaches. By increasing access to recovery coaches, people beginning their lifelong journey of sobriety can be partnered with people who know how to access the resources that are crucial for a successful recovery, and how to lead a successful life after addiction.

I'm proud to be a co-sponsor of these bills. The battle against addiction in our communities is one that we will fight for years to come. It will require resources at every level of government and cooperation across party lines. This package of legislation will not solve every problem, but they are necessary steps on the road to ending the drug epidemics facing Northwest Wisconsin. I look forward to continuing to work with my Assembly colleagues toward finding solutions to this issue.

- Magnafici, R-Dresser, represents the 28th Assembly District.