

Rep. Ortiz-Velez: AB 619 decriminalizing fentanyl testing strips passes State Assembly

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Madison—I am proud to announce that with the passage of Wisconsin State Assembly Bill AB619, fentanyl testing strips have been decriminalized. This bipartisan legislation was introduced by Representatives Ortiz-Velez, James, Zimmerman and Krug and co-sponsored by several members of the Wisconsin State Assembly and State Senate. Fentanyl is a powerful synthetic opioid that has been the leading cause of overdoses in the State of Wisconsin and the United States, and is undetectable to the naked eye. Prior to this legislation, fentanyl test strips were classified as “drug paraphernalia,” and were illegal to own, and could potentially result in prosecution. With the passage of this legislation, these test strips will no longer be criminalized. Fentanyl test strips are inexpensive and an effective way of detecting the dangerous presence of fentanyl in various substances. The lawful use of fentanyl testing strips in other states has resulted in a significant decrease in overdose deaths and has even resulted in behavioral changes among those who suffer from addiction. This bill decriminalizes these testing strips and will make them more accessible for those in need. As a state, we have to acknowledge the breadth and impact of the opioid epidemic, and part of that includes legalizing basic safety materials to protect those suffering from addiction. This bill will save lives, and protect our loved ones who need assistance.