

Framework for Testimony Presented to the Opioid Abuse Prevention Study Committee

On April 24, 2017, Speaker Jay Lucas created the House Opioid Abuse Prevention Study Committee. According to Speaker Lucas, the Study Committee is tasked with “identifying preventive measures and increasing treatment and recovery options to better protect South Carolinians from opioid abuse.”

Opioid abuse is a significant public health and family issue affecting thousands across our state. It is, therefore, tremendously important that the State of South Carolina utilize every available tool to curb this growing epidemic.

Recognizing that opioid abuse and addiction affects every community and does not discriminate against race, age, gender, socioeconomic class or profession, Chairman Eric Bedingfield and the members of the Study Committee will hold a series of public hearings in order to give those directly impacted an opportunity to share their thoughts.

Unfortunately, the time and resources of the Study Committee are limited. Individuals who wish to offer testimony and presentations are asked to do so within a framework designed to get information effectively and efficiently.

Each public hearing will include invited presenters who are familiar with the opioid crisis. After these witnesses address the Study Committee, the remaining time will be available to those battling addiction, law enforcement, the medical community and other individuals whose personal experience can **provide insight to the Study Committee as it prepares legislative recommendations**. We ask that you please limit your comments to 5 minutes. If time expires, **please consider submitting written testimony** or follow-up information to OpioidStudy@schouse.gov.

With those thoughts in mind, these questions become crucial:

- What is your experience with opioid addiction?
- Have you ever sought treatment for opioid related substance abuse? Did the treatment lead to recovery?
- Are available treatment options easily accessible in your area? What barriers prevent you from seeking treatment?
- What resources does the law enforcement community need to assist those battling opioid addiction?
- What can the State do to help collaboration and teamwork with law enforcement, the medical community, and nonprofit organizations to treat and prevent opioid abuse?
- What role should local governments take to better offer assistance to those seeking help with opioid abuse?
- How can the State government better assist in combatting the opioid epidemic?
- Do prevention education programs exist in your community to deter opioid abuse? What improvements can be implemented to produce greater results?

- If the General Assembly adopted legislation to address opioid abuse and addiction, what should that legislation contain?
- Are there any areas where the State can work with medical providers--to include clinics, physicians' offices, pharmacies, and hospitals--to prevent the abuse of prescription opioids?
- What role should K-12 and higher education play in opioid abuse awareness?

Before presenting to the Study Committee, please keep this framework in mind. The General Assembly cannot fully prevent opioid abuse and addiction, but it can act by passing legislation aimed at better protecting South Carolina.