



RHODE ISLAND
MEDICAL SOCIETY

June 20, 2018

Dear Governor Raimondo,

We the undersigned represent medical, public health, legal, and substance abuse recovery organizations, as well as individuals working in these fields. We continue to be deeply concerned about the potential negative impacts of "Kristen's Law" (H7715A/S2279A) and therefore urge you to veto this well intended but dangerous legislation.

The bill is dangerous because it would seriously undermine Rhode Island's progressive Good Samaritan Law. That law has already demonstrably saved many Rhode Island lives in the short time it has been in force. It has done so by providing assurance to people who happen to be at the scene of an overdose that they needn't think twice about doing the right thing to save a life: calling 911. Rhode Island has been a national leader in promoting a proven life-saving concept of overdose as a medical emergency rather than a crime scene.

"Kristen's Law" represents a significant step backward. It would promote confusion and doubt in situations that require unambiguous rules and decisive action. The legislation appears to sharply contradict Good Samaritan and would thus greatly muddy the community perception of how much protection, if any, Good Samaritans would still enjoy. While some language in the bill seeks to restore some of Good Samaritan's effect, it does so only weakly, partially and confusingly. ***In short, This bill is more likely to endanger lives than save them.***

While a House floor amendment attempts to offer protections for people who "share" drugs, we maintain that this will protect only a small percentage of people with substance use disorder who deserve to be spared harsh sentencing for crimes that are so often intimately linked to a seller's own addiction.

We think that the only way to make this right is for you to veto the bill. We all need to be around the table - prosecutors, medical professionals, people in recovery, and other entities to work towards a better bill that will accurately carry out the stated intent of the legislation.

We are proud to be from Rhode Island, where we have made strides in reducing the number of overdose deaths and have taken evidence-based, public health approaches to this tragic epidemic and where we have committed to the task of "justice reinvestment." The many hours of passionate debate in our legislature about this bill are indicative of how far we've come in destigmatizing addiction and promoting treatment and rehabilitation over tough criminal penalties. As is, however, this legislation does not reflect the spirit of Rhode Island's important efforts, and moves us backwards rather than forwards.

We thank you for your consideration of this request for a veto, and encourage you to make the right decision to further Rhode Island's leadership on taking evidence-based, public health efforts to address the overdose epidemic.

Sincerely,

Rhode Island Medical Society

Bradley J. Collins, MD, FACP, FHM

President

The Substance Use and Mental Health Leadership Council of RI
Susan A. Storti, PhD, RN, NEA-BC, CARN-AP
President/CEO

RICARES
Monica Smith
Executive Director

Protect Families First
Annajane Yolken, MPH
Executive Director

Mental Health Association of Rhode Island
Ruth Feder

Ocean State Coalition of Recovery Housing
Brian Sylvestre
President

Students for a Sensible Drug Policy
Betty Aldworth
Executive Director

ACLU of Rhode Island
Steven Brown
Executive Director

Project Weber/RENEW
Colleen Daley Ndoye
Executive Director

Rhode Island User's Union
Michael Galipeau, BSW
President

Rhode Island Center for Justice
Jennifer Wood, Esq.
Executive Director

Center for Prisoner Health and Human Rights
Josiah "Jody" Rich, MD
Bradley Brockmann, JD

Rhode Island Public Health Institute
Amy Nunn, ScD
Executive Director
Associate Professor of Public Health and Medicine
Brown University

OpenDoors RI
Nick Horton

Behind the Walls Committee at DARE - Direct Action for Rights and Equality
Sophia Wright

Parent Support Network
Lisa Conlan Lewis
Executive Director

National Lawyers Guild of RI
James Vita

Medical Professionals, Researchers, and Advocates
(In all cases, affiliation for identification purposes only)

Jasjit S Ahluwalia, MD, MPH, MS
Professor, Behavioral and Social Sciences
Center for Alcohol and Addiction Studies
Brown University

Sara Becker, PhD
Assistant Professor, Behavioral and Social Sciences
Brown University

Jeffrey Bratberg, Pharm.D
Clinical Professor
URI, College of Pharmacy

Lundy Braun, PhD
Professor of Medical Science
Brown University

Ashley L Buchanan, DrPH, MS
Assistant Professor
URI, College of Pharmacy

Cyril O. Burke III, M.D.

Geoffrey Capraro, MD
Assistant Professor of Emergency Medicine
Alpert Medical School, Brown University

Charles Carpenter, MD
Professor Emeritus
Former Director, Brown/Lifespan Center for AIDS Research
Alpert Medical School, Brown University

Seth Clark, MD

Megan Clingham, Esq.
RI State Mental Health Advocate

Suzanne M. Colby, Ph.D.
Professor of Psychiatry and Human Behavior
Alpert Medical School, Brown University

Amy Ferguson, MSW
RI Coalition for the Homeless

Michael Fine, MD

Peter Friedmann, MD

Heather Gaydos, MSW
Reentry Project Director
Center for Prisoner Health and Human Rights

Kristina Jackson, PhD
Professor, Department of Behavioral and Social
Sciences

Christopher Kahler, PhD
Associate Director, Center for Alcohol and Addiction
Studies
Brown University

Stephen Kogut, PhD, MBA
Professor of Pharmacy Practice
URI, College of Pharmacy

David Lewis, MD
Founder, Center for Alcohol and Addiction Studies

Alexandria Macmadu, MSc
Research Project Director
Center for Prisoner Health and Human Rights

Brandon Marshall, PhD
Associate Professor, Epidemiology
Brown University

Rosemarie Martin, PhD
Assistant Professor, Behavioral and Social Sciences
Brown University

Sarah Martino, MPA
Senior Project Director
Center for Prisoner Health and Human Rights

Michelle McKenzie, MPH
Senior Project Director
The Miriam Hospital

Michael E. Migliori, MD, FACS
Chief, Department of Ophthalmology
Rhode Island Hospital
Clinical Professor of Surgery (Ophthalmology)
The Warren Alpert Medical School at Brown
University

Cris Monteiro, L.Ac.
Providence Community Acupuncture

Peter Monti, PhD
Director, Center for Alcohol and Addiction Studies
Brown University

Amanda Noska, MD

James Padbury, MD
Professor of Pediatrics and Perinatal Biology
Alpert Medical School, Brown University

Brandi Parker Cotton, PhD
Assistant Professor
URI, College of Nursing

Lisa Peterson, LMHC/L.CDP/L.CDCS/MAC

Caroline Picker, L.Ac.
Providence Community Acupuncture

Michael Poshkus, MD

Susan Ramsey, PhD
Associate Professor, Psychiatry and Human Behavior
Alpert Medical School, Brown University

Elizabeth Samuels, MD

Radha Sadacharan, MD
James Shelton, L.Ac.
Providence Community Acupuncture

Megan C. Smith, MSW
Outreach Program Manager
The House of Hope CDC

Karen Tashima, MD
Professor, Medicine
Alpert Medical School, Brown University

Melissa Tiernan, L.Ac.
Providence Community Acupuncture

M. Catherine Trimbur, MD

John Trimbur, PhD

Rahul Vanjani, MD
Assistant Professor, Medicine
Alpert Medical School, Brown University

Steven Williamson, PhD
Professor, Department of Political Science
URI

Ira Wilson, MD, MSc, FACP
Professor and Chair, Department of Health Services,
Policy and Practice
Brown University School of Public Health
Professor of Medicine at the Alpert Medical School

Medical Students, Alpert Medical School
Eloho Akpovi, MS
Pranav Aurora
Vivian Chan

Katherine Cicolello
Joseph DiZoglio Jr.
Ligia Fragoso Delgado
Sarah Frantz
Christopher Halline
Damilola Idowu
Sarah Kler
Rebecca Raymond-Kolker
Andreas Lazaris
Liliana Luna-Nelson
Denise Marte
Meghna Nandi
Matthew Perry
Christiana Prucnal
Srav Puranam
Radhika Rajan
Paul Wallace