



JAMES J. O'DAY
REPRESENTATIVE
14TH WORCESTER DISTRICT

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
House of Representatives
State House, Boston, MA 02133-1054

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Gianina Chua
Office of Representative James O'Day
Gianina.Chua@mahouse.gov

Representative James O'Day and his colleagues passes landmark Opioid Bill
Providing Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) in Correctional Facilities amended to Opioid Bill

Boston, MA, August 1, 2018 – Representative James O'Day's (D - 14th Worcester District) and his colleagues passed the Opioid bill (H.4725) - An Act for prevention and access to appropriate care and treatment of addiction, which includes Representative O'Day's MAT amendment. This amendment will provide a medication assisted treatment to inmates with long-term opioid addiction to 9 correctional facilities in the Commonwealth by September 2019.

In MA, the risk of an opioid-related death after being released from incarceration is more than 120 times greater than for the general public. When an inmate is released from prison, they are at immediate risk for fatal overdoses during their first month out of prison. Time spent sober does not necessarily reduce your cravings. Inmates who are taken off their MAT or who are prevented from accessing it leave the prison opioid-naive: their tolerance is decreased, but their cravings are the same. They leave more likely to die than ever.

This amendment creates a three-year pilot program in 5 counties: Franklin, Hampden, Hampshire, Middlesex, and Norfolk and implements MAT in 4 state facilities: the two women's prison in MCI-Framingham, MCI Cedar Junction, and Medical and Scientific Advisory Council (MASAC), which is a treatment program for civilly committed men. The MAT program will provide opioid-related medication to inmates who were already taking them and if determined to be medically appropriate by a qualified addiction specialist. All county pilot programs will also make all FDA approved MAT drugs available through a pre-release program to any sentenced person for whom it is medically appropriate, at least 30 days prior to release. As for state facilities, prisoners will be given access to a qualified addiction specialist for an assessment, who will establish a medically appropriate treatment plan, not later than 120 days prior to expected release. Beginning 90 days prior to release, this treatment plan may include any form of MAT. MAT enables former inmates to rebuild their lives and give back to their community after being released.

"MA surpassed the national average in opioid related deaths in the last two years," stated Representative O'Day. "Considering that 40% of the inmates released in 2013 and 2014 died due to an opioid-related overdose, I am humbled and proud that my colleagues included the MAT amendment to the Opioid bill. As a whole, this bill will strengthen our Commonwealth's efforts to mitigate the ongoing opioid crisis in Massachusetts."

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For more information, please contact Gianina Chua at gianina.chua@mahouse.gov or at 617-722-2090