



Opioid Response Bill Signed by Minnesota Governor

July 16, 2019

July 16, 2019 - PRESSADVANTAGE -

Minnesota Governor Tim Walz signed into law the bill that will raise around \$20 million a year for addiction prevention and treatment by increasing fees for drugmakers. The increase in fees on prescription drug manufacturers and distributors will pay for a statewide response to the opioid epidemic in the state. The legislation is expected to raise around \$20 million a year which will be used to stem the opioid crisis.

“The opioid epidemic is devastating communities across Minnesota, claiming lives and leaving heartbroken families in its wake,” Walz said. “This law will help more families access the treatment they need and prevent addiction in the first place.”

Under this new law, annual licensing fees drug companies pay to do business in the state will jump from about \$200 to up to \$305,000 a year. The fees will drop to \$5,000 after five years if the fund reaches \$250 million, either through the fees or by a settlement from pending lawsuits against the drug manufacturers.

A new 19-member advisory council will use the funds to issue grants for programs that combat opioid addiction and prevent overdose deaths. It will also pay for law enforcement efforts, as well as programs aimed at providing non-narcotic pain treatment plans. Before it was signed into law, the bill faced opposition from pharmaceutical companies and even some patients.

“Unfortunately, what’s being proposed – taxing legitimately prescribed medicines that patients rely on for legitimate medical needs to raise revenue for the state – ignores evidence-based solutions, sets a dangerous precedent and ultimately won’t help patients and families,” said Nick McGee, director of public affairs for the industry trade group PhRMA.

This opposition was effective enough to derail similar proposals in recent years. But supporters of the bill noted the increasing seriousness of the opioid epidemic and the growing recognition for the scope of the issue. More people also became aware of the role manufacturers of addictive prescription drugs played in starting the crisis. This is what changed the political dynamic this year. In 2017, a record 422 Minnesotans died of an opioid overdose.

Minnesota lawmakers initially reached an 11th-hour deal on the opioid response bill in order to make it happen. Before a compromise was reached, versions of the proposal passed both chambers with bipartisan support. The legislation hit a snag amid a disagreement over whether to lower or roll back some licensing fees if the state wins a legal settlement in one of several pending lawsuits against the companies that make prescription drugs like OxyContin.

A week of intense negotiations followed, wherein lawmakers opted to lower the fees on some companies in five years if the fund reaches \$250 million. It will be done either through a large settlement or from the fee collections.

At that point, the amount paid by the largest opiate manufacturers would drop from \$305,000 to a little more than \$5,000 a year. At first, Democrats resisted linking the fees to possible settlements in the pending lawsuits. Click the link to see White Plain's top rehab placement programs.

“This bill is not about retribution, it’s about taking care of the needs of Minnesotans and making sure we don’t have any more lost people, lost loved ones,” said Republican Sen. Julie Rosen, chief author of the Senate bill and a key figure in the negotiations. “This is one thing we could have done, and we got it done.”

Supporters say that this agreement could make the state the first ever to establish a separate state fund dedicated to opioid addiction prevention and treatment. The lawmakers announced that the deal has been made mere hours before the Legislature’s adjournment deadline.

“This is a day I’m really proud to be a legislator,” said Rep. Dave Baker, a Willmar Republican. Baker’s 25-year-old son Dan died of an overdose in 2011. He added: “This is going to save a lot of lives.”

Lawmakers in both chambers approved the compromise language, the House 109-25, and the Senate 60-3.

The bill sets stricter limits on opiate prescriptions for acute pain and sets continuing education requirements for medical providers who prescribe addictive drugs. Doctors could override the caps if they feel it is medically necessary, depending on the situation.

“This is a really comprehensive bill,” said DFL Rep. Liz Olson, chief sponsor of the House bill. “It is not just about tackling the crisis in a one-dimensional way. It is about ongoing, dedicated revenue to tackle this crisis in a multipronged approach.”

If someone in the family is struggling with opioid or alcohol addiction, it is important to seek help. A combination of medical detox and behavioral therapy can go a long way in the fight against drug abuse. But because every individual is affected by addiction differently, a comprehensive program tailored to their specific needs is necessary. Look for a nearby addiction treatment facility today and find out how drug treatment programs work.

###

For more information about Rehab Near Me: White Plains, contact the company here: Rehab Near Me: White Plains

Rehab Near Me: White Plains

Rehab Near Me: White Plains is White Plains's top addiction treatment placement program for drugs, alcohol and prescription addiction cases.

Website: <https://rehab-near-me-white-plains.business.site/>



Powered by [PressAdvantage.com](https://pressadvantage.com)