



**Office of Alcoholism and  
Substance Abuse Services**

**ANDREW M. CUOMO**  
Governor

**ARLENE GONZÁLEZ-SÁNCHEZ, M.S., L.M.S.W.**  
Commissioner

October 27, 2015

Dear Provider:

I am pleased to share with you that Governor Andrew M. Cuomo signed a bill into law which provides that drug courts in the State of New York are prohibited from requiring defendants who are in recovery to stop taking doctor-prescribed medications as part of their treatment. Defendants who have been prescribed medication-assisted treatment for opioid addiction under the care of a physician must now be allowed to continue with that treatment while participating in drug court. I applaud Governor Cuomo for the passage of this law which will help save lives and connect more New Yorkers to addiction treatment.

This law is critical in New York State's efforts to help people impacted by opioid addiction. As you know, drug courts offer drug dependent offenders the opportunity participate in addiction treatment and return to productive living in society. It is vital that drug court participants who are struggling with opioid addiction have access to the complete array of available treatments, including addiction medications. Research has shown that these medications are effective in curbing the use of opioids including both heroin and the misuse of prescription opioids. Without medication assisted treatments, those addicted to opioids can be at a tremendous risk for fatal overdose. By ensuring access to addiction medications while participating in drug court, lives will be saved.

Governor Cuomo's steadfast commitment to combating heroin use and opioid misuse in New York State is making a real difference in our field and in our state. This latest law's passage is one more armament added to our arsenal to reverse alarming opioid abuse trends. Since passing historic legislation in September 2014, the Governor's #CombatHeroin and Prescription Drug Abuse initiatives have helped raise awareness, improve access to treatment, and have resulted in more than 1,800 lives saved through the use of the opioid overdose prevention medication naloxone. Well over 75,000 first responders, police officers, and community members have been trained to use naloxone and have been provided overdose reversal kits so they are prepared to save a life in an overdose emergency. More are being trained every day. These efforts together are making an impact and I thank you for your continued commitment to the individuals we serve.

Please join me in celebrating this important law's passage.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Arlene González-Sánchez".

Arlene González-Sánchez, MS, LMSW  
Commissioner

New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services

501 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue | New York, New York 10018-5903 | [oasas.ny.gov](http://oasas.ny.gov) | 646-728-4720

1450 Western Avenue | Albany, New York 12203-3526 | [oasas.ny.gov](http://oasas.ny.gov) | 518-473-3460