



STAT News

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FEDERAL UPDATE: Congress Acts, Leaves for Recess

Zika Funding: Emergency funding to address the Zika virus crisis did not happen, as the Senate voted down the House Zika spending bill on July 14, 2016 and members of the House and Senate soon left for a seven-week summer recess. Legislators have been battling over Zika funding ever since President Obama asked for nearly \$2 billion in funding back in February. The Houses' \$1.1 billion package that passed in June diverted \$622.1 million from other programs, including Ebola funding.

Local health department leaders say there are not sufficient resources for prevention and response efforts. This is especially troublesome as we move into the height of mosquito season. To date, New York has documented 387 human cases of Zika, all of which were travel associated. No mosquito pools have been found positive for Zika virus.

Mental Health Reform: The Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act was passed by the House on July 6, 2016. A similar bill could pass in the Senate by the end of the year. The Mental Health Crisis Act is designed to alleviate treatment gaps and improve oversight. It calls for more hospital beds for people dealing with a mental illness who need short-term hospitalization, and it creates the new federal position of Assistant Secretary of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Disorders, under the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Opioid Addiction: Congress passed the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act in early July. The act authorizes a number of programs and grants to help efforts to support prevention, treatment, and recovery programs. This is only authorizing legislation and no funding is attached. That will occur in the appropriations process.

STATE UPDATE: Organ Donation, Opioid Use Addressed

Opioid Epidemic: Like most other regions in the country, the Hudson Valley and Long Island are experiencing a worsening heroin and opioid epidemic. The New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) recently announced a program that temporarily allows certified residential and inpatient providers to increase their current certified capacity by up to 10 percent for six months. Programs must meet certain criteria in order to expand capacity. The state also recently authorized \$10.5 million in funding over five years to support six new Recovery and Outreach Centers in communities across New York. The centers will provide health, wellness, and other critical support for individuals and families who are recovering from a substance use disorder or are seeking recovery services. In the Hudson Valley and Long Island regions the centers are Independent Living Inc. and Family and Children's Association, respectively.

Organ Donation: Several bills passed in the recently concluded legislative session that encourage more opportunity for organ donation in New York State, which remains 49th in the nation in terms of organ donation registry success. These are intended to increase the number of individuals who participate in New York's Donate Life Registry by reducing the legal age from 18 to 16 years old, and by affirming organ donation participation upon application for a driver's license.

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