

February 15, 2018

Senator Robert Ort
Legislative Office Building
Room 815
Albany, NY 12247

Re: Request for Continued Funding: Substance Abuse Prevention and Intervention Specialists

Dear Senator Ort,

First, please accept our sincere thanks for funding Substance Abuse Prevention and Intervention Specialists (SAPIS) for the 2017-2018 school year. It was much appreciated and with opioid abuse crisis still raging in our borough, much needed.

The widespread use of Naloxone has helped decrease opioid-related deaths, but education and counselling is needed to prevent addiction from happening in the first place; it will take the cooperation of many organizations and agencies to effectively address this crisis, and adding even more SAPIS is a desperate necessity.

It is our belief that an across-the-board, K-12 effort is needed – and more SAPIS will be a keystone in achieving this “Manhattan Project” effort.

We understand that many resources are being utilized, but we believe that given the enormity of the problem and the increase in mortality that we could be – and should be – doing so much more to combat addiction disease.

We are not going to quote to you statistics with which you are already familiar; we are not talking about numbers, we are talking about the slow and painful loss of human life, and the attendant grief suffered by the families left behind. It is taking a toll not only on our borough, our city and our state, but on our entire nation.

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We are indeed grateful for your past help – but the crisis is deepening, and in order to effect positive change we need to push back harder than ever. SAPIS is at the forefront of that pushback.

So once again we implore you to assist us in our efforts to slow, and eventually eliminate, this deadly blot on our society. We ask you to please make the funds available to dramatically increase the number of SAPIS in our schools.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Sincerely,

James S. Oddo

James S. Oddo
President, Borough of Staten Island

Andrew J. Lanza

Andrew J. Lanza
Senator, 24th Senate District

Michael J. Cusick

Michael J. Cusick
Assembly Member, 63rd Assembly District

