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**State Representative Fiola Files Bill to Study Methadone**

**Centers and Alternatives to Distribution Methods**

**Fall River, MA (March 29, 2018)-** In response to the opioid crisis, State Representative Carole Fiola filed *H4337 An Act to create a commission to research current logistical issues related to outpatient methadone centers and identify alternatives to the distribution of outpatient methadone treatment* which is currently in the Committee on Mental Health, Substance Use and Recovery.

“As we continue to address the statewide opioid crisis, we have made changes to the prescribing of opioids, education of doctors and students, and ensured that lifesaving Narcan is in the hands of first responders among other efforts” said State Representative Carole Fiola. “We have also clearly identified that this crisis knows no geographic or socioeconomic boundaries and we work daily to destigmatize those struggling with the disease. However, we continue to dispense this medicine in only 35 cities and towns requiring patients to live in or near these communities. If established, this commission would evaluate alternative methods of administering methadone such as the possibility of administering in a pharmacy setting where it is more private. It is crucial that we bring individuals that are on the frontline of this crisis together to examine this long used tool in opioid treatment and recovery efforts.”

According to data provided by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, there are 35 cities and towns in the Commonwealth that encompass a total of 44 outpatient methadone clinics. “There are 351 cities and towns in the Commonwealth that battle with addiction from all socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds” said Fiola. “The herding of those in recovery each morning to only 35 cities and towns is not working to destigmatize addiction and does not provide equal access. We also need to begin to examine the impact on housing, counseling, support and public safety in communities that have these outpatient methadone centers.”

The commission would consist of 9 members: the commissioner of public health or the commissioner’s designee; a member Massachusetts chain pharmacy council; a member of the Massachusetts independent pharmacists association; a member of the Massachusetts medical society; a member of the Massachusetts hospital association; a member of the Massachusetts organization for addiction recovery; a member of the Massachusetts league of community health centers; 1 person appointed by the speaker of the house who shall be a member of the public actively involved in the recovery community; 1 person appointed by the senate president who shall be a member of the public actively involved in the recovery community. The commission would be required to file the findings of its study by December 31, 2019, with the clerks of the house and the senate, who shall forward the report to the chairmen of the house committee on ways and means, the senate committee on ways and means, the joint committee on public health, the joint committee on mental health, substance use, and recovery. This bill has 38 cosponsors of bipartisan support.

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