

Help Prevent Overdose Deaths in Massachusetts

Support the 911 Good Samaritan Campaign—January 2010

House Bill 1653—An Act Relating to Controlled Substances and Medical Treatment

HB1653 protects overdose witnesses and overdose victims from being charged or prosecuted for possession of a controlled substance when calling 911 to seek medical help during an overdose.

HB1653 does not protect people from being charged or prosecuted for offenses other than possession of a controlled substance, such as drug trafficking. In fact, the Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA) is in support of HB1653, indicating in their written testimony that the Association is concerned about the rate of drug overdose deaths in the Commonwealth.

Status: HB1653 is currently assigned to the House Committee on Bills in the Third Reading.

How you can support The 911 Good Samaritan Campaign

Contact **State Representative Vincent A. Pedone**, Chair of the House Committee on Bills in the Third Reading, at 617-722-2410 or Rep.VincentPedone@hou.state.ma.us and ask him to “**send House Bill 1653 to the House floor for debate.**”

Contact **Speaker of the House, Robert A. DeLeo**, at 617-722-2500 or Robert.Deleo@state.ma.us and ask him to “**support sending House Bill 1653 to the House floor for debate.**”

Contact your representative, ask him/her to “**support House Bill 1653 and send it to the floor for debate.**”

Find out who your legislators are by visiting: www.wheredoivotema.com or calling 800-462-8683 (VOTE).

You can use the script below if you are unsure what to say:

Hello. My name is _____ and I am a constituent in the district that Representative _____ represents. I'd like to ask the Representative to support moving House Bill 1653 to the floor for debate and voting in support of the bill.

Passing House Bill 1653 is important because:

- Overdose death rates have been steadily increasing in Massachusetts from 1990 to 2007.
- Nearly two people die every day in Massachusetts from an opiate-related overdose death.
- An overdose is a medical emergency that requires immediate attention by calling 911.
- Many witnesses don't call 911 for help during an overdose because they are afraid of police involvement.
- It will save lives by making it more likely overdose witnesses will call 911 for help.

Thank you for your support of this important legislative initiative.

Share this information with friends, family, advocates, allies and colleagues asking them to call their Representative and ask them to “**send House Bill 1653 to the floor for debate.**”

Contact the **Massachusetts Organization for Addiction Recovery** to learn how to get involved in supporting the 911 Good Samaritan Campaign—617-423-6627 or maryanne@moar-recovery.org.

If you need further information from DPH please contact Jim Hiatt at James.Hiatt@state.ma.us or 617-624-5102.

