



MOAR –

Massachusetts Organization for Addiction Recovery

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Recovery Take Action Opportunities for Today!

MOAR Information with Recovery Action Steps

- In order for public policy or proposals to become law, concerned constituents, organizations, or coalitions bring the proposal to at least one legislator.
- A legislator must agree to become lead sponsor, thus, the primary legislator endorsing the bill
- The bill is then filed in the House or Senate Clerk's Office by a certain date early in the legislative session.
- Other legislators may sign on as cosponsors; proponents who endorse the bill with signature.
- Each bill is submitted by a formal title, and initially gets a docket #, then a bill #.
- The numbers help to reference a bill, as there as many as 9000 proposed in a year.
- The bills are assigned to certain legislative committees, which schedule a public hearing for people to testify in favor or against.
- The assigned committee reviews the bill and passes them as “ought to pass” or “ought not to pass”.
- An “ought to pass” vote allows for the bill to go to the next step in the legislative process.
- A bill must go through the House, Senate, and to the Governor's desk in the approximate 18 month process.

So Right Now – Take Recovery Action

- As of June '09, most bills have been assigned a committee.
- Committees have started to assign hearing dates which are internet posted <http://www.mass.gov/legis/>
- Testify at a hearing if you can – If you can not in person, submit written testimony to committee chairs.
- Written testimony is really no more than an educational letter about why the bill is important.
- If the bill receives an “ought to pass” - it moves on in the legislative process.

Important Information:

To Find Your Legislators' Name and More:

State's Citizen Information Number: 1- 800-392-6090

Go on The Web: www.wheredoivotema.com

Call Your State Representative and State Senator at (617) 722-2000; ask the operator to be connected.

Mail Your Elected Legislator at Representative or Senator _____
The State House
Boston, MA 02133

What about The State Budget for Substance Abuse Services. \$8 million cut in Fall '09.

Massachusetts is experiencing an economic crisis and an addiction epidemic. There is a way to help! Did you know there is a sales tax exemption on alcohol beverages sold in stores? The Massachusetts Campaign for Addiction Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery is moving to repeal the sales tax exemption which could bring in \$115 million in revenues. The Senate passed the repeal! This would fund substance abuse services and 11 other public health services. Now a Conference Committee of 8 legislators must resolve the differences.

Educate Your Elected State Representative and State Senator About The Value of The Senate's Budget, and Thus, They Can Share The Message with The Conference Committee

Sample Telephone Message is

“Hello, I'd like to leave a message for Rep/Senator _____. My name is _____, and I am a constituent in your District. Regarding The Budget Conference Committee, I am calling about the importance of The Senate's move to repeal the sales tax exemption on store purchased alcohol beverages. This will raise \$115 million for addiction and other public health services. I know and you know how substance abuse affects our community. In a fiscal downturn, we need to invest in revenues for addiction prevention, treatment, and recovery support services – now more than ever. Please get back to me with your view. Thank you very much for all your considerations.

Make MA #1 for Addiction Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery! Educate Your Legislators about The Good Samaritan Act to Reduce Opioid Overdose Deaths.: Reduce The Fear of Calling 911! (Senate 1843)

“Hello, I’d like to leave a message for Rep/Senator _____. My name is _____, and I am a constituent in your District. I am calling to find out if Rep/Senator _____ would look at the importance of Senator Steven Tolman’s legislative proposal, (**Senate 1843**) “An Act to Reduce Opioid Overdose Deaths with a request for a favorable report from The Judiciary Committee. There were 645 opioid overdose deaths last year... the most ever. A factor is a witness’s fear of calling 911 due to possible prosecution because of illegal drug involvement. This bill provides limited immunity from drug possession charges when a drug-related overdose victim or a witness to an overdose seeks medical attention. You, as a supporter, could help reduce drug-related overdose deaths by removing barriers to calling 911.... That is being a Good Samaritan. Please let me know your view. Thank you very much.”

An Act To Improve Access to Alcohol and Other Drug Clinical Services “Hello, I’d like to leave a message for Rep/Senator _____. My name is _____, and I am a constituent in your District. I am calling to see if you would look at the importance of both Senator Steven Tolman (**Senate 517**) and Representative Martin Walsh’s legislative proposal (**House 1056**) **An Act To Improve Access to Alcohol and Other Drug Clinical Services**. If you see the importance, a request to Financial Services Committee to give this bill a favorable report is the next step. Passage would require insurers to reimburse for the services of a Licensed Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counselor I. It is ironic, that the profession with alcohol and drug counseling skills is not recognized by insurance providers. Insurance reimbursement will permit individuals and their families who suffer from, or are affected by alcohol and other drug abuse or addiction, to choose the human services professional most appropriate for their needs. Thank you!”

CORI Reform

“Hello, I’d like to leave a message for Rep/Senator _____. My name is _____, and I am a constituent in your District. I am calling to find out if Rep/Senator _____ sees the importance of the CORI Reform Bill filed by Rep Malia (**House 3523**) and Senator Chandler (**Senate 1608**). This measure would reduce employment and housing barriers for people who have a favorably ending case, and/or are demonstrating positive, changed lives.

You can add, if asked

The goal is to:

- Implement automatic sealing of favorably ending cases (e.g., not guilty)
- Require that only convictions and open cases be reported to non-law enforcement entities
- Prohibit employers from discriminating against CORI subjects based solely on a CORI
- Reduce length of time required to seal misdemeanor to 3 years and felony records to 7 years

If you see the importance, a request to Judiciary Committee for a favorable report is the next step.”

Provide Court Diversion of Low Level Offenders

“Hello, I’d like to leave a message for Rep/Senator _____. My name is _____, and I am a constituent in your District. I am calling to find out if Rep/Senator _____ sees the importance of Representative Martin Walsh’s legislative proposal, **to Provide Court Diversion of Low Level Offenders, (House 1962)**. **If so**, a request to Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services Committee for a favorable report is the next step. The bill allows MA Bureau of Substance Abuse Services treatment oversight for low level offenders who would opt for treatment as alternative sentencing. Without further crime, there would be no application of a criminal record. Thank you for getting back to me with your view.”

Removal of Alcohol Advertising on Public Transit

“Hello, I’d like to leave a message for Rep/Senator _____. My name is _____, and I am a constituent in your District. I am calling to find out if Rep/Senator _____ can see the importance of Representative Martin Walsh’s legislative proposal, which seeks to remove alcohol beverage advertising from public transit. Alcohol advertising is a deterrent to thinking through consequences of alcohol use. Thank you!”

An Act to Reduce Underage Drinking, “Hello, I’d like to leave a message for Rep/Senator _____. My name is _____, and I am a constituent in your District. I am calling to find out if Rep/Senator _____ can see the importance of Representative Brian Wallace legislative proposal, (**House 320**) **An Act to Reduce Underage Drinking**, in Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure Committee. Passage means placing warning labels on beer and wine with legal consequences if the purchase is for persons under 21. Thank you very much

And always add _ Please Get Back to Me with Your Views...

And As a Constituent- Speak Up Throughout The Legislative Session June 16, 09