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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

18TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

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HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
PENNSYLVANIA ATHLETIC
OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE,
CHAIRMAN

COSPONSORSHIP MEMORANDUM

TO: All House Members
FROM: Representative Gene DiGirolamo
RE: Co-Sponsor Request

In the near future, I plan to introduce legislation establishing a Methadone Death and Incident Review Team in the Department of Health to review methadone-related incidents and deaths from across the state. (This responsibility will be transferred to the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs effective July 1, 2011.) This legislation is needed because of the recent increase in reports of methadone-related deaths and methadone-related incidents.

This legislation was introduced in the 2009-10 Legislative Session and passed the Pennsylvania House of Representatives on 10/6/10 with a vote of 195-1. (HB2372)

Since 1998, the number of prescriptions written for methadone has increased by 700%. With this increased in prescribing, there has been a parallel increase in methadone-related incidents and methadone-related deaths. Nationally, there were 4,462 methadone-related deaths in 2005 which represents an increase of 468% since 1999.

Under this legislation, the Methadone Death and Incident Review Team will conduct methadone death reviews for all deaths where methadone was either a primary or secondary cause of death. The team shall examine the

circumstances surrounding methadone-related deaths and incidents in this Commonwealth for the purpose of promoting safety and reducing these deaths.

The Methadone Death and Incident Review Team shall have the following duties:

- Determine the role that methadone played in each death;
- Develop best practices to prevent future methadone-related deaths;
- Collect and store data on the number of methadone-related deaths and brief description of each death;
- Prepare an annual report that includes aggregate data on five-year trends for methadone use and abuse, and legislative and administrative changes to prevent future methadone deaths and abuse. The report shall be posted on the department's internet website and distributed to the Majority and Minority Chairs of the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committees and Judiciary Committees as well as the Majority and Minority Chairs of the House Health, Human Services and Judiciary Committees.

If you would like to co-sponsor this legislation, please contact Jennifer Korac in my office at 783-7319 or email at jkorac@pahousegop.com.