On June 27, cameras flashed at the Mineola office of the Long Island Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (LICADD), the NCADD Affiliate serving Nassau and Suffolk counties in New York State, as New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman announced passage of the new I-STOP legislation.

The Internet System for Tracking Over-Prescription (I-STOP) is the first of its kind legislation that, among other things monitors prescriptions and requires doctors and pharmacists to check patient prescription history before supplying drugs. "It targets the people and problems that lead to prescription drug abuse," says Schneiderman.

The Attorney General attributed a large portion of this success to Long Island, "because this is where a lot of the coalition that passed this bill came from. No place else in the state worked harder than Long Island to get this done."

Picture at left are Jeffrey Reynolds, PhD, Executive Director, LICADD; Nassau County District Attorney Kathleen Rice (at podium) and NYS Attorney General Eric Schneiderman

Prior to the passage of the I-STOP legislation, prescription drug system in New York State was incredibly susceptible to abuse. Also in attendance was Kathleen Rice, the District Attorney of Nassau County, who alluded to the blatant abuses of the prior system that would no longer exist under I-STOP. "We've had dirty pharmacists who accept prescriptions written out in crayon."

The I-STOP legislation is a stellar example of what NCADD Affiliates can do to inspire change. Efforts on the part of Dr. Jeffrey Reynolds, LICADD Executive Director, families affected by addiction, and the rest of the hardworking staff and volunteers at LICADD, allowed for the bill to make its way through Albany, according to Attorney General Schneiderman, "with lightning speed." Although this is cause for celebration, there is still much more work to be done. Dr. Reynolds compared the passing of the I-STOP legislation to "shutting off the gas line" with many more fires still to put out.

By no means does the I-STOP system prevent all types of misconduct; however, it is "going to just make it a lot harder get these prescriptions and to dispense these drugs," in the words of Attorney General Schneiderman. The Attorney General, along with the other proponents of the

legislation, believe that the I-STOP system is the most comprehensive in the country and should be used as a model for the entire nation to follow.

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