



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 360

Resolution calling on the appropriate committee of the Council of the City of New York to hold hearings regarding the safety and effectiveness of prescribing antidepressants to children and adolescents.

By Council Member James, Quinn, Jackson, Barron, Jennings, Brewer, Fidler, Gerson, Gonzalez, Katz, Lopez, Sanders, Seabrook, Gennaro, Stewart, Gentile, Palma and Comrie

Whereas, According to an April 10, 2004 study published in the British Medical Journal entitled “Efficacy and Safety of Antidepressants for Children and Adolescents” (the “Study”), there are significant risks associated with prescribing antidepressants to children and adolescents; and

Whereas, As noted in the Study, the reliability of certain clinical trials funded by pharmaceutical companies examining the effectiveness and safety of anti-depressants in children and adolescents is questionable in that “the authors...have exaggerated the benefits, downplayed the harms, or both”; and

Whereas, In 2003, Britain barred the use of Paxil, a selective serotonin re-uptake inhibitor, for depression in children because of an increase in self-harm and suicidal behavior and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration recommended that Paxil not be used to treat depression in children, saying it was no more effective than placebo, according to an April 4, 2004 New York Newsday article entitled “Antidepressant Study, Big Rise in Medicated Children” (the “Newsday Report”); and

Whereas, Children and adolescents need effective treatment for depression; and

Whereas, According to the American Psychiatric Association, suicide is the third leading cause of death among young people aged 15-24; and

Whereas, Notwithstanding concerns regarding the safety and effectiveness of prescribing antidepressants to children, according to the Newsday Report, between 1998 and 2002, the percentage of girls

age five and under taking antidepressants doubled, and use among boys age five and under increased by 64 percent, and

Whereas, Additionally, according to the Newsday Report, among those age 18 and younger, antidepressant use increased from 1.6 percent in 1998 to 2.4 percent in 2002, reflecting a 49 percent increase; and

Whereas, Given the growing use of antidepressants among children and adolescents, as well as increased safety concerns, it is imperative that such use be examined and that appropriate policy responses be developed; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the appropriate committee of the Council of the City of New York hold hearings regarding the safety and effectiveness of prescribing antidepressants to children and adolescents.

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