



## New Jersey General Assembly

Nicholas A. Chiaravalloti  
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Committees  
Human Services, Vice Chair  
Commerce and  
Economic Development

January 30, 2018

Office of the State Comptroller  
PO Box 024  
Trenton, NJ 08625

I am writing to request the New Jersey State Comptroller Office conduct, investigate and provide a report concerning any and all monies appropriated in Fiscal Year 2017 in regards to the opioid epidemic in New Jersey.

In response to the devastating effects of the opioid epidemic on New Jersey, the legislature authorized the governor to take action. This action was taken in good faith and in reaction to the fact that at least 1,901 people have died from opioid overdoses in New Jersey in 2016. Deaths involving heroin have more than doubled since 2013, while fentanyl-related deaths have risen by 2,000%. Everyone agrees that this is a serious issue that impacts every part of the State of New Jersey.

Unfortunately, former Governor Chris Christie chose to use money from underfunded budget needs. The Office of Legislative Services has reported that the transfer included:

- \$18.75 million from a debt-service fund for payments on school construction maintained by the NJ Department of Education (total from fiscal 2017 and fiscal 2018);
- \$8.53 million from Tuition Aid Grants administered by the NJ Department of State (fiscal 2018);
- \$8.5 million from the New Jersey Building Authority, an interdepartmental account (fiscal 2018);
- \$5.62 million from Preschool Education Expansion Aid, an NJ DOE program (fiscal 2018).



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It has been widely reported that these funds were used to create an advertising campaign "to raise awareness." Not one additional bed was opened, not one additional dollar was dedicated to treatment.

Additionally, it was reported that Trenton lobbyist and public relations firms have been hired to create this advertising blitz and that these contracts extend into this calendar year. Therefore, I am requesting clarification on

- where the money used to fund this media campaign were appropriated from accounts;
- how accounts could be deemed excess funds prior to the conclusion of the fiscal year or a reasonable period to make such a determination;
- how consultants were obtained and hired for the media campaign;
- who was involved in developing the strategy used to develop the advertising campaign.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nicholas A. Chiaravalloti".

Nicholas A. Chiaravalloti, J.D., Ed.D.  
Assemblyman

CC: Governor Phil Murphy  
Senate President Stephen Sweeney  
Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin