Assemblymember Rodriguez Introduces Legislation to Protect Healthcare Workers from Opioid Exposure

(SACRAMENTO, CA)- Assemblymember Freddie Rodriguez (D-Pomona) introduced legislation at the State Capitol to provide new protections for healthcare workers who have direct contact with patients being treated for opioid overdose. Assembly Bill 2537 will require employers to create plans to deal with opioid exposure and take steps to ensure safety for both medical staff and the patient.

“From EMT’s responding to a call or nurses and doctors providing care, emergency and healthcare workers are at a great risk for contact with potent opioids through a variety of ways. The smallest exposure opioid can result in a severe reaction and even death.

As a former 30+ year career EMT, I have been at the front line providing lifesaving services to those who have overdosed. When we come in contact with overdosed patients our priority is ensuring they are stabilized, which means our own safety is sometimes put at risk. By making sure we have safety protocols in place, we are guaranteeing that not only patients are safe, but also healthcare workers.

In 2017 there were 2,199 overdose deaths involving opioids in California, with most cases involving synthetic opioids, mainly fentanyl. Fentanyl was responsible for more than a two-fold increase, from 229 to 536 deaths between 2017 and 2018. Fentanyl, one of the strongest opioids, is considered lethal at only 2 milligrams for a typical adult.
Assemblymember Rodriguez (Twitter) represents the 52nd Assembly District, which includes the cities of Chino, Montclair, Ontario, Pomona and portions of unincorporated Fontana. He is Chair of The Assembly Committee on Public Employment and Retirement, and Chair of the Legislative Inland Empire Caucus.