



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR  
James L. Seward

## Seward Bill Ensuring Moms-To-Be Will Receive Vital Prenatal Care Signed Into Law

JEFF BISHOP, COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR December 24, 2015

| ISSUE: **INSURANCE, HEALTH CARE, WOMEN'S HEALTH**

**ONEONTA, 12/24/15** – State Senator James L. Seward (R/C/I-Oneonta), chairman of the senate standing committee on insurance, today announced landmark legislation (S.5972B) he sponsored, which will greatly enhance women’s health care in New York State, has been signed into law. Senator Seward’s bill adds pregnancy as a qualifying event for women to enroll in any health insurance plan at any time.

**“Quality prenatal health care is vital to ensuring the well-being of both mother and child alike,”** said Senator Seward. **“Clearing insurance hurdles to help pregnant women access health care will help head off a number of health risks and provide long-term cost savings to the state’s health care system.”**

Previously, New Yorkers could only purchase insurance coverage through the exchange outside of an open enrollment period when certain “qualifying events” such as marriage, divorce, becoming a U.S. citizen, or giving birth occur.

Senator Seward’s legislation adds pregnancy to the list of qualifying events and will allow a pregnant woman, upon certification of a health care practitioner, to enroll in any health plan at any time, regardless of the open enrollment period on the exchange or any other restrictions in seeking coverage off the exchange.

In announcing the signing of the law, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo said, “This legislation will help expectant mothers get access to essential pre-natal care and help build a stronger and healthier New York. I thank the bill sponsors for their hard work on this critically important issue that will have a significant impact on future generations of New Yorkers.”

**“This rectifies yet another major gap in the federal Affordable Care Act, and will save women from being forced to choose between costly out of pocket health care expenses or sacrificing critical medical care. My legislation will also start mother and child on the path toward a healthy future that could stave off a variety of significant health concerns and costs,”** Seward added.

Studies show that infants born to mothers who have had little or no prenatal care have lower birth rates and higher rates of infant mortality. Maternal mortality is also higher among women who do not receive prenatal care, as is the rate of other health risks for pregnant women, including preeclampsia, placental abruption, and diabetes.

**“The time of pregnancy is filled with great expectations and excitement, but also anxiety. This legislation will erase at least one concern and provide moms-to-be with some peace of mind,”** Senator Seward concluded.

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#### RELATED LEGISLATION

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### **2015-S5972**

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- Introduced
  
- - In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
  
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate

- ○ Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
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Relates to permitting pregnant individuals to enroll in the state health insurance exchange at any time

June 14, 2015

Signed by Governor

Sponsored by **James L. Seward**

Do you support this bill?