



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Shelley B. Mayer

CBS: New York senator honored for efforts to help families affected by pediatric cancer

LORI BORDONARO September 14, 2024

IRVINGTON, N.Y. — New York State Sen. Shelley Mayer was honored Saturday for her fight to reduce the financial burden for families affected by pediatric cancer.

The [Pediatric Cancer Foundation](#), the [Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation](#) and the [Making Headway Foundation](#) presented Mayer with an Award of Excellence and a gift of appreciation.

"This is an underrecognized, terrible, devastating disease, so the more of us that can get out here and spread awareness and have leaders march and champion of our cause, the better off we will be because change cannot come fast enough," said Pamela Strauss Peligri, executive director of the Pediatric Cancer Foundation.

Bill proposed by Sen. Mayer would help families with evaluation costs

Mayer proposed a bill that would require all insurance companies to cover the cost for neuropsychological evaluations for children with cancer. The tests can cost thousands of dollars for families who are already overwhelmed with medical bills.

Mayer said the bill passed unanimously in the Senate, but not the House. She plans to reintroduce it at the end of the year.

Nine-year-old Naomi Wood was diagnosed with medulloblastoma two years ago.

"It was completely devastating ... We didn't know if we had her for three more years or we have her for a regular life," father Andrew Wood said.

In addition to medical treatments, she also needed a neuropsychological evaluation for school.

"That evaluation is so essential for knowing what kinds of accommodations and interventions she needs," mother Astrid Storm said.

Naomi's parents say, luckily, insurance covered her evaluation.

Nonprofits aim to eradicate childhood cancer

Mayer proclaimed Saturday to be Pediatric Cancer Foundation Day, and the Mario Cuomo Bridge was lit in gold to mark the observance.

"I really try to channel my empathy for these families into action," Mayer said.

Michael Henry, director of advocacy for the Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation, lost his daughter to cancer five years ago. He says her radiation alone cost over \$700,000.

"The out-of-pocket expenses for families, it's devastating. It can really cause some families to become bankrupt," he said.

He's now turning his tragedy into advocacy, joining others to not only let lessen the burden, but to help eradicate childhood cancer.

"We've been instrumental in getting that cure rate to above 80 percent, but we're still inching towards that 100 percent. We're not going to stop, we're not going to go away until it's done," Strauss Peligri said.

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March 07, 2024

In Assembly Committee

Sponsored by Shelley B. Mayer

Do you support this bill?