



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

William Larkin

Senate Passes Larkin Bill To Test For Hiv

[WILLIAM J. LARKIN JR.](#) August 1, 2005

Legislation (S.5722) sponsored by Senator Bill Larkin (R-C, Cornwall-on-Hudson) to require the timely testing of law enforcement, fire, and emergency medical personnel who may have been exposed to a serious transmissible disease while on the job was passed the State Senate today.

"The procedures that are currently in place to address these kinds of situations are very inconsistent and vary from city to city and town to town across New York State," said Senator Larkin. "When a police officer, firefighter, corrections officer, or other public protection official is exposed to HIV or hepatitis in the line of duty, they should be immediately covered for testing and preventative drug regimens within 24 hours."

Under current law, there are no financing mechanisms or established standard procedures that allow for quickly obtaining an HIV or hepatitis examination once a public protection official has been exposed to a significant risk of transmission of HIV or hepatitis while on the job.

Larkin said that because there is no standard procedure in place to quickly offer tests to these individuals, they are needlessly taking numerous tests over the course of years that merely test for HIV antibodies. Since the officers do not know whether they have been exposed to HIV, they have no choice but to take expensive AIDS treatment drugs that may

be either unnecessary or detrimental to their health.

There are now new testing and drug regimens that can quickly identify and treat the HIV virus and hepatitis within 24 hours. These treatments are particularly effective if they can be initiated shortly after an individual has been exposed to HIV or hepatitis.

"This bill makes it clear when and how police, fire and emergency medical technicians can obtain the most cost effective and advanced medical examination to diagnose and begin early treatments when they have been exposed to these diseases," said Larkin. "Enacting this measure should help protect our service personnel, reduce the spread of AIDS and hepatitis and provide more treatment options to those who may have been infected in the course of performing their jobs."

The bill also passed the Assembly today and was sent to the Governor for his approval.