



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Neil D. Breslin

Public Hearing on Autism Spectrum Disorder

NEIL D. BRESLIN September 21, 2009

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On October 23, 2009, New York State Senate Committees on Insurance, Health, and Mental Health & Developmental Disabilities will hold a public hearing on the role of health insurance in the treatment of autism spectrum disorder. Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is one of the fastest growing neurodevelopmental disabilities in America. According to a recent U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) study, autism spectrum disorder affects as many as 1 in 150 American children. In New York State, it is estimated that 33,000 children and youth from birth to age 17 have autism. Most health plans in New York do not cover or cover a very small amount of the expenses of treating ASD. As a result families of those with ASD typically are forced to pay for the costs of treatment on their own. Such costs, which can be as high as \$2,000 to \$4,000 per month, place a significant financial strain on families.

Several other states have laws requiring health insurers to cover treatment for ASD. There is also legislation pending in the U.S. Congress which would require, among other things, health insurers to cover the diagnosis and treatment of autism spectrum disorders. There is increasing pressure on New York state legislators from families of individuals with ASD and advocacy groups to pass legislation which would require health insurance coverage for the treatment of New Yorkers with ASD. The goal of the public hearing is to explore a solution which would help lessen the financial burden on individuals with ASD and their families but which would not place an undue burden on health plans. **The hearing will start at 10 a.m. on October 23 and will be held in Meeting Rooms 2 and 3 of the Empire State Plaza, Concourse Level, in Albany, New York. Please contact my office at (518) 455-2225 if you would like more information.**

Click [here](#) to view the hearing notice