



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Stephen M. Saland

## Saland Bill to Protect Patients Using Eye Medications Passes Senate

STEPHEN M. SALAND June 30, 2010

| ISSUE: **HEALTH CARE**

State Senator Steve Saland (R,I,C – Poughkeepsie) today announced that his bill dealing with refilling of eye drop prescriptions has unanimously passed the Senate.

Saland's bill (S.7001B), will help protect patients who have been prescribed eye drops by their physician but who may run out of the drops prematurely. In order for treatment to be effective, patients must follow their doctor's orders consistently. Running out of the drops can occur when the container is defective or additional drops spill from the container during use. This frequently happens to those with unsteady hands, often the frail or elderly. Even those using the utmost care in storing and using the eye drops at times find it impossible to ration the medication to last the period of intended use.

When a patient runs out of their prescription eye drops before the intended period of use and returns to their pharmacist seeking a refill of the prescription, coverage is denied by the insurance company and the patient is turned away empty handed. Many of these medications are not available in generic form and are very costly, thereby making it difficult for patients to pay for the necessary prescription out of pocket which creates a burden, especially on the elderly, particularly those on fixed incomes. This legislation will provide much needed protections for those who rely on prescription eye drops for the preservation of sight by permitting refills to be made so long as the number of physician prescribed refills

have not been exhausted.

“Modern medicine has provided us with invaluable medications to help protect and improve eyesight,” said Senator Saland. “Too many people, however, run out of their prescription eye drops too soon which reduces their effectiveness. It has been shown that this problem disproportionately impacts the frail or elderly. This legislation will allow those patients to get refills of their eye drops early in order to maintain the continuity of treatment prescribed by their doctors.”

The bill has been sent to the Assembly for consideration.