



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Charles J. Fuschillo Jr.

Fuschillo Bill to Protect Individuals WITH Autism Approved by Senate Insurance Committee

CHARLES J. FUSCHILLO JR. April 11, 2011

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Senator Charles J. Fuschillo, Jr. (R-Merrick) today announced that the Senate Insurance Committee has approved legislation he sponsors to ensure that individuals with autism receive insurance coverage for the screening, diagnosis and treatment of autism spectrum disorders.

Currently, individuals with autism are routinely denied insurance benefits for treatment of their disorder, forcing them to spend tens of thousands of dollars out of their own pockets to cover treatment costs.

Autism Spectrum Disorders affect individuals of all ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic groups. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) estimates that 1 in 110 children, including 1 in 70 boys, are currently affected with autism. More children will be diagnosed with autism this year than with AIDS, diabetes, and cancer combined, according to Autism Speaks, one of the nation's largest autism science and advocacy organizations.

Senator Fuschillo (R-Merrick) said, "Families who have a loved one with autism are often forced to make a choice no one should have to make; forgoing important health treatments or going broke to get care for their loved one. This legislation would put an end to that by ensuring that families have the costs of screening, diagnosis, and treatment of autism spectrum disorders covered by insurance. This is a positive step towards getting families with autism the coverage they need to care for their loved one. I am hopeful that this legislation will soon be passed by the full Senate."

The legislation (S4005) would require insurance companies to provide coverage for the screening, diagnosis, and treatment of autism spectrum disorders. In addition, the legislation would prohibit an insurance company from terminating coverage or refusing to renew, adjust, amend, issue, or execute a policy solely because the individual has been diagnosed or received treatment for autism spectrum disorders.

Michael Giangregorio of Merrick, who has a son with autism, said, "As a parent who has a child with autism, I am extremely pleased that this legislation has been approved by the Senate Insurance Committee. So many families with autism have depleted their savings and exhausted their finances because their insurance company refused to cover the treatment costs. Senator Fuschillo's legislation would put an end to that and ensure that families have access to treatment."

The legislation builds upon an existing law, authored by Senator Fuschillo, which prevents insurance companies from denying treatment coverage otherwise covered by the policy solely because the treatment is provided to diagnose or treat an autism spectrum disorder.

If this legislation becomes law, New York would join twenty-five other states which have already enacted similar autism insurance reform laws. The legislation is supported by Autism Speaks.

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