



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Neil D. Breslin

Breslin Applauds Recent Announcement That Six of the Largest Health Insurers Will Make Their Rate Filings Public

NEIL D. BRESLIN October 28, 2011

Sites the prior approval law he sponsored as the necessary and initial step to make our health care system more transparent

(Albany, NY) Senator Neil D. Breslin (D – Delmar), ranking member of the Senate Insurance Committee, was pleased to learn that six large health insurers have agreed to have their rate filings made available to the public. Senator Breslin lauds Benjamin Lawskey, the Superintendent of the Department of Financial Services (DFS), for his efforts in making the process more open and transparent.

This is the type of system that Senator Breslin had envisioned when he sponsored the prior approval law in 2010. “Before this law took effect, health insurers not only did not have to make their rate requests available to the public, but they went into effect immediately,” explained Breslin. “This lead to exorbitant rate increases making health insurance more and more unaffordable for working families and small businesses.”

Under the new system, health insurers must not only spend a larger percentage of every premium dollar on health care, but they also have to actuarially justify to the DFS that a rate increase is appropriate. Already we have seen a reduction in the rate increases that health insurers have requested. According to the DFS, contracts that are due to start on or after

January 1, 2012, the average increase has been reduced on average from 12.7 percent to 8.2 percent, saving hardworking New Yorkers approximately \$400 million in 2012.

“The public has every right to know how their health insurance rates are being determined,” said Senator Breslin. “The more information the consumer has, coupled with the increased accountability by the health insurer, will only lead to a system that is more fair, more balanced and ultimately more competitive.”

Senator Breslin is now calling on all the remaining health insurers to withdraw their objection to making their rate requests public and join the six companies (UnitedHealth Group, Aetna Health, EmblemHealth, Empire HealthChoice, Excellus Health Plan and HealthNow) that have agreed to this more open process.

####