



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Charles J. Fuschillo Jr.

Senator Fuschillo Announces New Autism Insurance Reform Law Takes Effect Tomorrow

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Senator Charles J. Fuschillo, Jr. (R-Merrick) announced today that a new law he authored to enable individuals with autism spectrum disorders to receive insurance coverage for screening, diagnosis and treatment, will take effect tomorrow, November 1st. The new law will save families with autism tens of thousands of dollars a year in out of pocket costs for autism treatment and therapies which many insurance companies refuse to cover.

“For years, families have fought for access to treatment coverage for their loved ones with autism,” said Senator Fuschillo. “This new law affords individuals with autism the opportunity to receive treatments and therapies they need without being forced to spend tens of thousands of dollars out of pocket every year. The law taking effect tomorrow will dramatically improve the lives of families affected by autism.”

Under the law, insurance companies are required to provide coverage for the screening, diagnosis, and treatment of autism spectrum disorders, including

behavioral health treatments, speech therapy, occupational therapy, and physical therapy. Many insurance companies have routinely denied coverage for these treatments, forcing families to choose between exhausting their finances or forgoing important treatments because they can't afford the cost. Insurance companies are also prohibited from terminating coverage or refusing to renew, adjust, amend, issue, or execute a policy solely because the individual has been diagnosed with or received treatment for autism spectrum disorders.

The new law builds upon an existing law, authored by Senator Fuschillo, to ensure that individuals with autism receive equitable coverage.

Autism Spectrum Disorders affect individuals of all ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic groups. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) estimates that 1 in 88 children, including 1 in 54 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.

Michael Giangregorio of Merrick, who has a son with autism and is the Long Island Volunteer Executive Chair of Autism Speaks, said, "November 1st will be a great day for my family and every other New York family who has a loved one with autism. After years of fighting, we will finally have equal access to the care, treatments, and therapies our loved ones need. We appreciate Senator Fuschillo standing with us and never giving up the fight to get this much needed law passed. It will make a tremendous difference in the lives of so many families."

With this law taking effect, New York now joins 31 other states which have enacted similar autism insurance reform laws. The law is supported by Autism Speaks, the Medical Society of the State of New York, New York State Association for Behavior Analysis, and Families Together in New York State.

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