



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Monica R. Martinez

Expanding Mammogram Coverage for New Yorkers: Senator Monica R. Martinez Passes Shannon's Law in the NYS Senate

MONICA R. MARTINEZ June 13, 2019



(Albany, NY) On Thursday, June 13, 2019, Senator Monica R. Martinez (D-Brentwood) passed Shannon's Law (S.3852-A), a bill requiring insurance companies to cover annual mammogram screenings for New Yorkers ages 35 to 39, in the New York State Senate. Earlier today, Senator Martinez joined Assemblywoman Kimberly Jean-Pierre (D-Babylon) Senator Phil Boyle (R-Bayshore) advocates, and family members of the late Shannon Saturno, to encourage their colleagues in the Assembly to follow suit.

This legislation is named in honor of Shannon Saturno, a Babylon teacher who was diagnosed with breast cancer while pregnant and passed away at 31 years old.

Shannon's Law would expand access to annual breast exams for New Yorkers in their 30s. Insurance companies are currently only required to cover annual mammogram screenings for women over the age of 40, but statistics show that 1 in 227 women in the U.S. between the ages of 30 and 40 are diagnosed with breast cancer.[1] Over 12,000 cases of breast cancer detected annually are in women under the age of 40, with over 26,000 in women under 45. Oftentimes, when breast cancer is detected in younger women, it's in later stages and is more aggressive. [2]

It is important to emphasize that both men and women are affected by breast cancer, and that this legislation will cover all individuals regardless of gender. The American Cancer Society estimates that 2,670 men will be diagnosed with invasive breast cancer in 2019, and approximately 500 men will die as a result. [3]

"I strongly believe in the importance of early detection, and it is imperative that individuals under 40 have access to annual mammograms when deemed medically necessary. With 1 in 8 women developing breast cancer in their lifetime, the passage of this bill is critical to enabling early detection and saving lives. Insurance coverage should work to facilitate early detection, not make it more difficult for individuals to determine if they have cancer," stated Martinez

"The conversation about breast cancer prevention and awareness is often geared toward older women, but this vicious disease affects women of all ages," Jean-Pierre said. "Far too many women under the age of 40 get a late diagnosis, making the cancer harder to fight. It's time we lowered the age of covered annual mammogram screenings to provide access to an early detection measure that saves lives."

"Early detection is critical to identifying breast cancer at a stage when treatment is the most effective, and least expensive. New Yorkers should not be penalized by insurance companies for seeking life-saving preventative care. Thank you Senator Martinez and Assemblywoman Jean-Pierre for your leadership in advancing this important legislation. I am proud to stand with you in support of Shannon's Law."

"I am proud to stand with First Company Pink and my colleagues across the aisle to increase access for mammograms and other services related to early detection of breast cancer. Breast cancer is a prevalent health risk many women face and there should be no restrictions when it comes to screenings and prevention. I applaud Sen. Martinez and Assemblywoman Jean-Pierre for their efforts on this issue and am hopeful we can pass this bill before session adjourns next week," said Assemblyman Mike LiPetri (R-Massapequa).

"Early detection of breast cancer is key in saving lives," said Senator David Carlucci (D-Rockland/Westchester). "No woman should be denied coverage of potentially life-saving mammograms because she doesn't fit a profile. Shannon Saturno was only 29-years-old when she was diagnosed with breast cancer. It's time we increase access for all women based on what their doctor recommends, not what insurance will cover."

"I stand with Senator Martinez and Assemblywoman Jean-Pierre in highlighting the importance of passing Shannon's law this session. It is essential that we expand access to cancer detection services, particularly for populations that have shown to be vulnerable to late detection. Everyone knows someone who has been affected by cancer, and this common-sense expansion of breast cancer detection services for women under 40 will save the lives of many loved ones in the state of New York. I fully support this bill and urge my colleagues in the Senate to vote in the affirmative," said Senator John Brooks

“Shannon’s law defines a new era in breast health with its inclusion of a younger generation and its offering of new options says Linda Bonanno Founder of “got checked?” This crucial bill will open the door to much needed progress in breast cancer screening, but also in educating women towards prevention and early detection,” said Donna Cioffi, President of First Company Pink.

Assemblywoman Jean-Pierre and Senator Martinez have worked closely with Donna Cioffi and Linda Bonanno of First Company Pink—a not-for-profit organization dedicated to raising funds to support life saving breast cancer research as well as breast cancer prevention through education—to help generate the support needed to pass Shannon’s Law. Too many young women like Shannon have lost their lives to breast cancer, which is why expanding coverage for mammograms is extremely important, Jean-Pierre and Martinez noted.

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[1] cancer.gov/types/breast/risk-fact-sheet

[2] youngsurvival.org/learn/about-breast-cancer/statistics#1

[3] <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/breast-cancer-in-men/about/key-statistics.html>