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Stavisky and Rosenthal Herald Passage of Their First-in-the-Nation Legislation at Memorial Sloan Kettering Breast Cancer Awareness Event

Insurance Coverage for Scalp Cooling Systems Will Go Into Effect January 1, 2026

New York, NY – Senator Toby Ann Stavisky (D-Queens) and Assemblymember Linda B. Rosenthal (D/WF-Manhattan) joined Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center (MSK) to mark the beginning of Breast Cancer Awareness month by celebrating the passage and signing of their first-in-the-nation law requiring insurance companies to cover the cost of scalp cooling, a hair preservation treatment used by cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy. The law goes into effect on January 1, 2026.

The event, which was hosted by MSK, convened medical experts and cancer patients for a panel discussion on mental health, fertility preservation, workplace accommodations and hair preservation.

“Cancer treatment should be about healing, not hardship. For so many patients, hair loss is one of the most devastating aspects of chemotherapy and is a poignant reminder of their illness. Scalp cooling offers a proven way to reduce that burden—working successfully in 80-85% of patients—and helps preserve not just hair, but dignity and a sense of self. That’s what is most important about this treatment. I am grateful to my colleague Assemblymember Linda Rosenthal, as well as MSK, the advocates, and healthcare professionals who helped make this law a reality,” **said Senator Toby Ann Stavisky**, Chair of the Senate Committee on Higher Education.

“Undergoing chemotherapy doesn’t mean you have to lose your hair or your identity,” **said Assemblymember Linda B. Rosenthal**, Chair of the Assembly Committee on Housing. “Before this legislation was signed into law, far too many health insurance companies treated hair preservation as nothing more than a cosmetic procedure. Let me be clear: no one should have to convince multi-billion dollar companies that their hair, and by extension, their life, is worth saving. This law will give cancer patients the privacy and the control they so deserve during one of the most physically and emotionally challenging periods of their life.”

Under the new law, large private health insurance plans must cover scalp cooling systems used alongside chemotherapy treatment. Patients wear a cooling cap before, during, and after each session. The cap, filled with chilled liquid, lowers the temperature of the scalp and reduces the amount of chemotherapy drugs that reach hair follicles, helping to preserve a patient’s hair.

Scalp cooling is already covered by Medicare and Medicaid, and three FDA-approved systems are available nationwide. The law passed with broad support from leading cancer advocacy groups and medical providers, including the American Cancer Society, Sharing and Caring, the Rapunzel Project, the American Nursing Association, and major hospitals such as Memorial Sloan Kettering, Columbia, Mount Sinai, Northwell, Weill Cornell, NYU, Montefiore, Stony Brook University, Roswell Park, the University of Rochester Medical Center, and NYC Health + Hospitals.

The event also featured remarks from MSK clinicians and survivors, including Maureen Green, whose advocacy helped drive the legislation forward.

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