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Senate Majority Advances Legislation to Protect Access to Vaccinations & Uphold Vaccine Efficacy Standards

(Albany, N.Y.) At a time when vaccine efficacy is being challenged by the U.S. Department of Health and members of the federal government, we are advancing a package of legislation that upholds scientific standards, expands access to vaccinations, and further empowers our state's health care providers to administer vaccines and immunizations to New Yorkers.

This package includes legislation that would permit pharmacy technicians, nurses, and medical assistants to administer vaccinations and immunizations; require children's vaccine requirements to abide by regulations issued by the state Commissioner of Health; and obligate insurance providers to expand coverage and reimbursements for vaccines and immunizations.

As the federal Department of Health seeks to remove vaccinations from standardized immunization schedules, this package also incorporates legislation that would require insurance providers and Medicaid to continue covering certain vaccines and immunizations, protecting insurance coverage for New Yorkers.

Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins said, "At a time when federal health officials are undermining science and casting doubt on lifesaving vaccines, New York is standing firmly behind our medical professionals and belief in modern medicine that has protected the health of everyone in our communities. This legislative package reaffirms our commitment to public health and strengthens our healthcare system by standing with the medical professionals who keep New Yorkers safe and healthy every day. It is critical that we advance legislation to demonstrate our commitment to modern medicine and strengthen New York's healthcare system."

The legislation being passed by the Senate Majority includes:

- **Authorizing Registered Pharmacy Technicians to Administer Immunizations:** This bill, [S.7025B](#), sponsored by Senator Cooney, would authorize registered pharmacy technicians to administer the same immunizations as licensed pharmacists while under the direct supervision of a licensed pharmacist.
- **Requiring Coverage of COVID-19 and Other Established Vaccinations:** This bill, [S.8334A](#), sponsored by Senator Gounardes, would require commercial insurers to cover COVID-19 vaccinations, and would require Medicaid to cover the same and other established vaccinations.

- **Broadening Immunization Recommendations and Coverage:** This bill, [S.8496C](#), sponsored by Senator Hinchey, would authorize health care practitioners to order and administer immunizations recommended not only by the federal Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), but also by independent, state, or interstate entities. Furthermore, it would require state-regulated insurance plans to cover vaccines recommended by these entities.
- **Ensuring Sound Childhood Immunization Practices:** This bill, [S.8853](#), sponsored by Senator Mayer, would call for children’s vaccine requirements to conform to regulations issued by the state Commissioner of Health, which regulations must be based on generally accepted medical standards and recommendations.
- **Permitting Nursing Students to Administer Certain Vaccines:** This bill, [S.5706A](#), sponsored by Senator Skoufis, would permit nursing students to administer certain vaccines, and would permit physicians and nurse practitioners to prescribe and order nursing students to administer certain vaccines.
- **Requiring the Reimbursement of Vaccination Expenses:** This bill, [S.5852](#), sponsored by Senator Skoufis, would require insurance companies to reimburse total direct and indirect practice expenses associated with vaccinations, in order for health care providers to more affordably administer vaccines.
- **Authorizing Medical Assistants to Administer Vaccinations:** This bill, [S.5340B](#), sponsored by Senator Stavisky, would authorize and train medical assistants to administer immunizations under the direct supervision of a physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant.

Bill sponsor Senator Jeremy Cooney said, “At a time when we increasingly have to rely on our own state for safe, reliable healthcare standards, I’m proud to join my colleagues in the Senate Majority to push for greater vaccine access for all New Yorkers, including with my bill to expand the responsibilities of registered pharmacy technicians. As more individuals choose pharmacies to receive their vaccines, we need to make sure patients are properly taken care of throughout New York.”

Bill sponsor Senator Andrew Gounardes said, “The Trump administration may continue to spew misinformation and confusing, contradictory advice, but New York should stay laser-focused on protecting the health of our children, expectant parents and everyone else in our community. My bill ensures everyone who wants the COVID-19 vaccine can get it. This is about giving New Yorkers control over their own health.”

Bill sponsor Senator Shelley Mayer said, “I am pleased that my legislation to ensure New York maintains a vaccine schedule grounded in accepted medical standards and the expertise of recognized public health organizations was included in today’s vaccine access package. In recent years, we have seen a shift away from scientifically validated vaccinations, causing an increase in outbreaks of preventable diseases, putting individuals and entire communities at heightened risk. New Yorkers deserve healthcare rooted in science, evidence, and the best available medical guidance. This legislation will help safeguard the health of our communities by ensuring that our immunization schedule reflects established medical consensus and trusted public health

expertise. I am grateful to Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins and my colleagues for prioritizing the health and well-being of all New Yorkers.”

Bill sponsor Senator James Skoufis said, “RFK Jr. is a menace to the public's safety, endangering Americans — especially children — every day with his baseless, unscientific conspiracy theories disguised as health policy. I’m proud to support this important pro-vaccine package of bills with my colleagues that expands access to immunization and guarantees proper insurance reimbursement. Vaccines have saved millions of lives, are firmly rooted in science, and ought to be embraced by New York State in the face of the conspiracy theories that endanger our communities.”

Bill sponsor Senator Toby Ann Stavisky said, “I have always believed that prevention is one of the most powerful tools we have to protect our communities. Vaccines save lives. But access must match science. My bill, S.5340A, authorizes trained medical assistants to administer immunizations under the direct supervision of a physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant. This is a practical, common-sense step that expands capacity in doctors’ offices and community health settings without compromising safety. Most importantly, this is about making sure every New Yorker has timely access to the care they need.”

Community Health Care Association of New York State (CHCANYS) President and CEO Rose Duhan said, “CHCANYS thanks the State Senate Majority for advancing a thoughtful and forward-looking bill package that helps protect and expand vaccine access statewide, which is essential to keeping communities healthy and resilient. We are particularly proud to see the passage of legislation enabling medical assistants to administer vaccines, which CHCANYS has long supported. This commonsense legislation strengthens our healthcare workforce and protects access for the communities that need it most.”

Dr. Vanessa Salcedo, MD, Vide-Chair, NYS American Academy of Pediatrics said, “The New York State American Academy of Pediatrics strongly supports this comprehensive package of legislation to improve access to immunizations for children and families across New York. By ensuring insurance coverage and adequate reimbursement for vaccines, expanding the number of trained professionals who can safely administer immunizations, and aligning state vaccine policies with nationally recognized scientific and medical standards, these bills strengthen New York’s immunization infrastructure. Together, these measures will reduce barriers to vaccination, improve timely access to preventive care, and protect infants, children, and adolescents from preventable disease — advancing the health and safety of communities across NY.”

President of the NYS Academy of Family Physicians Dr. Christine Doucet said, “Given the recent instability and turmoil in the federal vaccine landscape — including the weakening of ACIP, actions to limit recommendations for certain vaccines, changes to the childhood immunization schedule and the spread of vaccine misinformation — New York's leadership in vaccine policy is more critical than ever. We commend the State Senate for taking up a strong package of bills to protect patient access to lifesaving vaccines and provide clarity and consistency through science-based policies. We have prioritized a number of these bills to ensure vaccine integrity so New Yorkers may continue to receive disease-preventing immunizations.”

Founder of the Hispanic Health Network and President of the Latino Commission on AIDS Guillermo Chacon said, “Any legislation that would codify, in state law, the ability of registered pharmacy technicians to administer vaccinations under the supervision of licensed pharmacists is a win for all New Yorkers. We strongly support the enactment of this important legislation on the current legislative session to ensure that New York enables pharmacy technicians to continue to assist local pharmacists in ensuring that all communities have access to health education, disease prevention, and lifesaving vaccinations.”

Vice President for Program Strategy & Impact at Hispanic Federation Bethsy Morales-Reid said, “Latino communities have historically faced significant barriers to accessing care, such as difficulty getting to a health care center, finding appointments outside of traditional work hours, and finding health providers with linguistic and cultural competencies. Having additional avenues to access vaccinations — especially via pharmacies which usually have convenient hours of operations and easily accessible by working families — eases the process for Latino, working families to become vaccinated. This legislation would permanently authorize pharmacists to administer routine childhood immunizations in accordance with the State Health Commissioner’s regulations and require insurance companies to provide comprehensive coverage for recommended vaccines. We urge the Legislature to act swiftly and ensure New York is no longer reliant on temporary federal authorizations to protect the health of all its residents.”

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