

NEWS FROM

Senator Chris Jacobs

REPRESENTING THE 60TH NEW YORK SENATE DISTRICT



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JACOBS INTRODUCES BILL IMPROVING ACCESS TO FERTILITY PRESERVATION SERVICES FOR CANCER PATIENTS

Legislation would enable patients, regardless of age, to pursue the best cancer treatments available without sacrificing reproductive options

(Buffalo, NY) – New York State Senator Chris Jacobs (60th SD) has introduced legislation that would improve access to fertility preservation services for cancer patients whose treatments may directly or indirectly cause infertility. The bill, S7163, accomplishes this by requiring health insurance policies to provide coverage for standard fertility preservation prior to a patient beginning their recommended cancer treatments.

“With the incredible advancements in modern medicine today, no woman should have to choose between life-saving care and the ability to conceive children later in life,” Jacobs said in a press conference at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center today. “Tragically, these are the options that too many people are faced with, and I am pushing this legislation so we can offer these patients better options and more hope.”

In 2016, approximately 150,000 people across the United States were diagnosed with cancer during their reproductive years. Of that population, men have up to a seventy percent chance of reproductive compromise while women face up to an eighty percent chance of reproductive compromise. Often overlooked in the consideration of fertility preservation are young adolescent women. A key component of the Jacobs bill is a provision that ensures coverage is provided regardless of age.

Insurance helps cover the treatments and effects of cancer for these patients, but planning for future fertility is solely at the expense of the patient. Costs for the services could range as high as \$15,000 placing significant stress and anxiety on someone already burdened with a life-threatening medical emergency.

“Many young adults survive their cancer only to be blindsided and overwhelmed by the impacts their treatment may have on their family planning and the expenses they will face trying to address those realities,” said Lynda Kwon Beaupin, MD, a staff physician with Roswell Park’s pediatric, adolescent and young-adult program. “When you talk about the costs, that sometimes is where the conversation stops. Many younger survivors simply can’t afford fertility preservation, which can have a devastating impact on their well-being and quality of life.”

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Jacobs Bill Improves Access to Fertility Preservation – Add One

Renowned hospitals like Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center and Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center are lending their support of Senator Jacobs' bill, as are a number of survivors and advocates. Virginia Wettlaufer Tomenson is a cancer survivor who was born and raised in Buffalo and now resides in New York City with her husband and daughter. Wettlaufer is a passionate advocate for the fertility preservation cause and approached Jacobs about sponsoring the legislation.

"In far too many cases, the costs of these services cause patients to delay treatment, choose less aggressive therapy, or in many instances doctors do not even present fertility preservation as a viable option," said Wettlaufer Tomenson. "As a cancer survivor who was able to receive these services, and as a proud and loving Mother, I want other patients to have the same options I did, and I want them to know they can have the same happy ending I have," Wettlaufer Tomenson added.

"If New York State is going to continue to be a leader in medical research and providing life-saving care, then we must also be a leader in ensuring our residents have access to these quality of life and quality of health services," said Jacobs. "That's what this bill will accomplish and I am hopeful that we get it approved in this legislative session," the Senator concluded.

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