SERINO CONTINUES PUSH TO COMBAT ELDER ABUSE

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| ISSUE: **ELDER ABUSE**, **SENIORS**, **HEALTH**

| COMMITTEE: **AGING**

ALBANY, NY—Senator Sue Serino (R, C, I—Hyde Park) announced today that her bill to empower health care providers to detect elder abuse in their patients passed in the Senate, adding a critical layer of protection for New York's Seniors.

"There are few people better positioned to screen for elder abuse than the physicians our seniors know and trust," said Senator Serino. "This bill gives physicians the tools they need to recognize the signs of abuse and get their patients the help they need, stopping abuse in its tracks. It is time to put our seniors first, change the elder abuse statistics and ensure that New Yorkers have the opportunity to live out their Golden Years free from harm."

Specifically, the bill **(S. 6925)** aims to engage trusted medical professionals to help identify and assist patients at a high risk for abuse by directing the Commissioner of Health to establish protocol for voluntary screening to aid physicians, physicians assistants and nurse practitioners in identifying and reporting cases of abuse or maltreatment. To that end, the tool will provide practitioners with guidance that articulates, among other things, common definitions of abuse, questions that may be used for those who have cognitive impairments as well as a list of resources that may be provided to those patients identified as being victims of abuse.

As Senator Serino notes in the bill's memo, elder abuse has emerged as one of the nation's most underreported crimes, with an estimated 300,000 cases going unreported each year and she notes that it has been shown that elders who experience abuse, even moderate in severity, have a 300% higher risk of death when compared to those who have not been abused.

Unfortunately, those being abused frequently refuse to report abuse as it too often occurs at the hands of loved ones, friends, neighbors and people our seniors have known and trusted for significant amounts of time. Detecting elder abuse is made even more challenging given the fact that there have been systematic issues with implementing comprehensive elder abuse screening and intervention, even at the federal level, because it cuts across areas

impacting not only physical health, but mental and financial health as well as personal safety.

Over a decade ago, the U.S. Preventative Services Task Force found that, in the primary care setting, there are no uniform screening tools available to identify abuse of elder adults. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) developed and implemented an elder abuse screening tool within the Physician Quality Reporting System in 2009 in order to decrease hospitalizations, readmissions, and mortality. Senator Serino's bill was modeled after the Elder Maltreatment Screen and Follow-Up Plan that was developed for CMS and aims to set the standard for screening in New York.

"Whether out of shear inability, fear, embarrassment, or the desire to protect an abuser that they know and trust, our seniors too often choose not to report abuse," said Senator Serino. "We have a duty to ensure that we have systems in place to protect those most vulnerable to abuse. With health care professionals uniquely positioned to gain their patient's trust and ensure their health and safety, giving them the tools they need to recognize and report abuse is a commonsense measure that can save lives."

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RELATED LEGISLATION

2015-S6925

- Introduced

- - In Committee Assembly

- In Committee Senate

- - On Floor Calendar Assembly

  - On Floor Calendar Senate

- - Passed Assembly

  - Passed Senate

- Delivered to Governor

- Signed By Governor

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Relates to procedures by health care providers to detect elder abuse or maltreatment in their patients

March 07, 2016

In Assembly Committee

Sponsored by Susan Serino

Do you support this bill?