



NEWS FROM SENATOR SIMCHA FELDER

Contact: Bryan Best
518-455-2758
best@nysenate.gov

For Immediate Release
April 21, 2022

Crohn's & Colitis ID Card Now Available Thanks to Felder-Paulin Bill

Senator Simcha Felder and Assemblywoman Amy Paulin are pleased to announce that the New York State Department of Health has finally made the Crohn's & Colitis ID Card available on their website: https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/crohns_colitis/. The New York State Crohn's & Colitis ID Card was developed as a result of a law sponsored by Senator Felder and Assemblywoman Paulin which provides people with these medical conditions a simple way to verify their condition and access their legal right to a restroom facility.

"Coping with an illness is hard enough, without added indignity. I am pleased that the Department of Health has finally made this card available on their website to help thousands of people easily utilize the protections they are legally entitled to," said Senator Felder. "This card is a common-sense way to educate business employees of their responsibilities under the Crohn's and Colitis Fairness Act, and prevent the need to explain or argue over qualifying conditions."

"I'm thrilled that the NYS Department of Health is now issuing Crohn's and Colitis Identification Cards to those with these medical conditions. These new ID cards are a way to alleviate the burden on people with Crohn's and similar ailments, and make it easier for them to exercise their legal right to use the restroom," said Assemblywoman Amy Paulin. "Those who have Crohn's and Colitis often have limited control over their physical situation and I'm so happy that Senator Felder and I were able to pass the Crohn's and Colitis Fairness Act and help them in this way."

"Only a few years ago the topic of Crohn's and Colitis was taboo, nobody talked about it and people who were diagnosed felt like they suffered alone. Today, thanks to a lot of outreach and advocacy, things have changed drastically and members of our support group number in the thousands. Everyone with Crohn's disease faces this problem once, twice, three times a month, some almost every day," said Yoely Drummer, Founder and Executive Director of the Jewish Crohn's and Colitis Support Group. "When I got involved in this cause back in 2013, I often I felt that I was alone. We had Assemblywoman Paulin supporting us all along, but we were missing our support in the State Senate. Then I met Senator Felder and he offered us his full support and took the Crohn's and Colitis fairness act to the next level by improving the enforcement."

This law means that we can all have an easier life. I'm thrilled to finally share this news with our members and begin focusing on new projects to advocate for."

[Originally enacted in 2017, the Crohn's and Colitis Fairness Act](#) allows access to employee-only restrooms by individuals with Crohn's, Colitis, or other similar conditions, in any business open to the public during business hours, if there are at least two employees present at the time. In practice, however, these rights have proven hard to access. Businesses were unfamiliar with the new law and employees had no way of confirming an eligible medical condition.

Senator Felder and Assemblywoman Paulin's legislation, which was signed into law in 2021, built on the Crohn's and Colitis Fairness Act, by requiring the Department of Health to create a printable card that a person can get a health professional to sign, stating their rights under the Crohn's and Colitis Fairness Act.

[According to the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation](#), as many as 1.6 million Americans suffer from the chronic, incurable gastro-intestinal conditions that significantly affect the health and quality of life. Conditions causing debilitating urgency to use a restroom limit the lives of otherwise capable, contributing members of society. When public restrooms are not available, providing access to employee-only facilities is a small accommodation with an outsized impact.

"This simple card will make it easier for businesses to comply with the law and help make life a little easier for people with these common gastrointestinal conditions," concluded Senator Felder.