



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Toby Ann Stavisky

Senator Stavisky/Assemblymember Rosenthal sponsored legislation benefiting New Yorkers battling cancer is signed into law

TOBY ANN STAVISKY December 19, 2024

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ALBANY, NY – State Senator Toby Ann Stavisky (D- Queens) and Assemblymember Linda B. Rosenthal (D/WF-Manhattan) announced that their legislation (S2063-A /A38-A) requiring health insurers to cover the cost of scalp cooling systems, a hair-preservation treatment used by cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy, was signed into law. With the signing of this landmark legislation, New York becomes the first state in the nation to require coverage of this therapy for chemotherapy patients.

“This legislation is important to those undergoing chemotherapy treatments,” **says Senator Toby Ann Stavisky.** “Hair loss can be devastating and this cold scalp cooling system works in approximately 80-85% of patients. An individual will be viewed not as a sick person but as a person. I thank my colleague, Assemblymember Linda Rosenthal, the advocates, and elected officials.”

Assemblymember Linda Rosenthal said, “Undergoing chemotherapy is one of the most emotionally and physically distressing medical experiences that one can endure. Women receiving this treatment say that losing their hair adds extra trauma to their cancer

diagnosis, altering their identity and self-esteem, serving as a constant reminder of their disease and signaling to others that they are ill. However, far too many health insurance companies view scalp cooling solely as a cosmetic treatment and refuse to cover its cost. This first-in-the-nation legislation gives cancer patients, particularly women, an opportunity to reclaim a small part of themselves as they navigate one of the most tumultuous times of their lives.”

Under the new law, large private health insurance plans must provide coverage for scalp cooling systems that are used in connection with chemotherapy treatment. As part of the treatment, patients must wear a cooling cap before, during and after each chemotherapy session. The cooling system is composed of a cap filled with cold liquid kept at 32 degrees Fahrenheit that constricts blood vessels in the scalp, reducing the amount of chemotherapy drugs that reach the hair follicles, which helps to preserve a person’s hair.

Scalp cooling systems are already covered by Medicare and Medicaid, and three different cooling systems have already been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. The law had widespread support across the state, including by the American Cancer Society, Sharing and Caring, the Rapunzel Project, the American Nursing Association and major hospitals and research centers: Memorial Sloan Kettering, Columbia, Mount Sinai, Northwell, Weill Cornell, NYU, Montefiore, Stony Brook University, Roswell Park, the University of Rochester Medical Center and New York Health and Hospitals.

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