



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

William Larkin

Larkin Bill To Test For Hiv Signed Into Law

[WILLIAM J. LARKIN JR.](#) August 15, 2005

Legislation (S.5722) sponsored by Senator Bill Larkin (R-C, Cornwall-on-Hudson) to require the timely testing of law enforcement, fire, and emergency medical personnel who may have been exposed to a serious transmissible disease while on the job has been signed into law by Governor Pataki.

"I am extremely pleased that the Governor has signed this bill into law," said Senator Larkin.

"When a police officer, firefighter, corrections officer, or other public protection official is exposed to HIV or hepatitis in the line of duty, they will now be immediately covered for testing and preventative drug regimens within 24 hours."

Before now, there were no financing mechanisms or established standard procedures that allowed for quickly obtaining an HIV or hepatitis examination once a public protection official had been exposed to a significant risk of transmission of HIV or hepatitis while on the job.

Larkin said that because there were no standard procedure in place to quickly offer tests to these individuals, they have been needlessly taking numerous tests over the course of years that merely test for HIV antibodies. Since the officers do not know whether they have been exposed to HIV, they have no choice but to take expensive AIDS treatment drugs that may be either unnecessary or detrimental to their health.

There are now new testing and drug regimens that can quickly identify and treat the HIV virus and hepatitis within 24 hours. These treatments are particularly effective if they can be initiated shortly after an individual has been exposed to HIV or hepatitis.

"This new law makes it clear when and how police, fire and emergency medical technicians can obtain the most cost effective and advanced medical examination to diagnose and begin early treatments when they have been exposed to these diseases," said Larkin. "This measure will help protect our service personnel, reduce the spread of AIDS and hepatitis and provide more treatment options to those who may have been infected in the course of performing their jobs."

The new law becomes fully effective in February 2006.