



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John A. DeFrancisco

Senator DeFrancisco Praises Governor for Introducing Legislation to Make Timothy's Law Permanent

JOHN A. DEFRANCISCO May 5, 2009

Senator John A. DeFrancisco (R-I-C, Syracuse) today praised Governor David A. Paterson for announcing legislation to make "Timothy's Law" (Ch. 748 of the Laws of 2006) permanent. The law is currently set to expire on December 31, 2009.

"Timothy's Law" requires insurers issuing group or school blanket health insurance policies or contracts in New York to provide a minimum of 30 inpatient days and 20 outpatient visits (30/20 benefit) for the treatment of mental health conditions. In addition, "Timothy's Law" requires large group health insurance policies to provide coverage for adults and children diagnosed with biologically based mental illnesses and children diagnosed with serious emotional disturbances at the same level of coverage as is provided for other health conditions.

"I commend Governor Paterson for proposing legislation to make permanent this very important law," said Senator DeFrancisco. "I was pleased to cosponsor "Timothy's Law" in 2006, and now I will do all that I can to support the Governor's proposal to make it permanent. We must ensure that New Yorkers receive the mental health coverage they need to properly treat their mental health conditions."

“Timothy’s Law” is named in memory of Timothy O’Clair, a twelve year old boy who committed suicide in 2001. Timothy’s parents could not obtain the mental health treatment he needed, because of their health insurance coverage limits.

The Governor’s proposal follows a report issued by the Superintendent of Insurance, in consultation with the Office of Mental Health (OMH), which studied the impact of “Timothy’s Law.” The Governor accepted the report and its findings, which include:

- Access to 30/20 benefit mental health coverage increased from 42 percent to 100 percent in the combined large and small group markets;
- Access to coverage of biologically based mental illnesses and serious emotional disturbances in children beyond the 30/20 benefit increased from 9.6 percent to 43.7 percent in the small group market, and from 11 percent to 100 percent in the large group market; and
- The 30/20 benefit increased monthly costs by approximately \$1.04 per member per month in the small group market, amounting to ½ of 1 percent of the total monthly cost.