



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael F. Nozzolio

## Senator Nozzolio Announces April 2010 as Autism Awareness Month

MICHAEL F. NOZZOLIO April 1, 2010

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In recognition of individuals diagnosed with autism, as well as their families and the dedicated professionals who work with them, State Senator Mike Nozzolio is helping to recognize April as Autism Awareness Month.

“It is now estimated that one out of every 110 American children is affected by an autism spectrum disorder. There are literally hundreds of families in the Finger Lakes region affected by autism,” said Senator Nozzolio. “Autism Awareness Month presents a vital opportunity to learn more about the particular challenges that families affected by autism

face and for these families to gain a better understanding of the services and programs that are available to them.”

As part of his efforts to raise awareness for autism, Senator Nozzolio is sponsoring a resolution that will proclaim April 2, 2010 as Autism Awareness Day in New York State. Senator Nozzolio is also sponsoring legislation (S.7000) that would require accident and health insurance policies to provide coverage for screening, diagnosis and treatment of an autism spectrum disorder.

“With autism, early diagnosis and intense early intervention are critical to gain the most benefit from existing therapies. However, while insurance companies and HMOs routinely cover treatment for similar neurobiological disorders, most health insurance plans in New York do not cover autism treatment. This legislation will close a significant gap in insurance coverage for individuals with autism,” said Senator Nozzolio.

In addition, Senator Nozzolio is sponsoring legislation (S.6880) which would create the New York Autism Spectrum Disorders Treatment, Training and Research Council. This Council will bring together the resources available in New York by uniting a range of public and private entities and will create a State Policy and Plan to address the primary needs of citizens impacted by autism spectrum disorders.

"Families coping with a diagnosis of Autism deserve all the help, support and compassion that we can provide. I admire the determination of the parents to provide every possible opportunity for their children and I will continue to fight for this critical legislation and support programs that help children diagnosed with autism. I remain committed to helping in whatever way I can to support these individuals and their families, ” concluded Senator Nozzolio.