



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Ruben Diaz

Governor Paterson Expected to Sign Third-Party Notification Bill

RUBEN DIAZ April 27, 2010

| COMMITTEE: **AGING**

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GOVERNOR PATERSON EXPECTED TO SIGN THIRD-PARTY NOTIFICATION BILL

Albany, NY - Legislation sponsored by Senator Rev. Rubén Díaz (D-Bronx) and Assemblyman George Latimer (D-Westchester) to provide senior citizens with the ability to designate third-party notification provisions on health care insurance policies is before Governor Paterson, awaiting his signature into law.

"This bill is very simple," stated Senator Díaz. "It simply allows health insurance subscribers sixty-five years of age and over to designate a third party to be informed prior to the cancellation of a health insurance policy," he continued. "We believe the Governor will sign the bill into law in the next day or two - and seniors will gain an important protection," Latimer stated. The legislation (A.217/S.5456) passed both legislative houses earlier in 2010 by large margins. The provisions allow for senior citizens who hold health care insurance policies to designate a third-party individual - a spouse, adult child, friend, lawyer or advisor - to receive notices from the insurance carrier with urgent information regarding the policy

provisions usually only mailed to the policyholder.

“In some cases,” Diaz and Latimer stated, “seniors may be unable to fully grasp the importance of a mailed notice, which might govern the change in a premium, possible termination of the policy, and so forth. The expectation is that the third-party individual notified will be able to identify the urgency of the message and assist the senior in whatever may be required to maintain that policy in force.” The Senator and the Assemblyman noted that there may be some further coverage clarification required in the definition of what constitutes a health insurance policy that may be the subject of a chapter amendment to the bill, but that such modification should not change the likelihood of approval. “It is, ultimately, the authority of the Governor to act as he sees fit,” they concluded.

The bill will become effective six months after the Governor signs it, allowing time for implementation by all insurance carriers, under the review of the State Department of Insurance.

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