



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Neil D. Breslin

## Volunteer Firefighters and Ambulance Workers Now Qualify for More Affordable Health Insurance

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(Albany, NY)-Legislation (S5111), sponsored by Senator Neil D. Breslin (D-Delmar), Chair of the Insurance Committee, which recognizes and rewards men and women who volunteer in their local fire or ambulance companies by permitting any public corporation to extend health services and insurance to volunteer firefighters and ambulance workers has been signed into law by Governor Paterson.

“Volunteer firefighters and ambulance workers provide a valuable service to their communities and it is appropriate that their public service be recognized” said Senator Breslin. “This act will allow volunteers – many of whom are without insurance or paying very expensive premiums– to receive affordable coverage through their municipality, including those local governmental entities offering their employers health insurance through the New York State Health Insurance Plan (NYSHIP.) Currently, NYSHIP is offered in approximately 900 municipalities across the state.”

Volunteer firefighters make up the largest number of firefighters in New York State. According to the Office of Fire and Prevention, in 2009 there were approximately 96,000 volunteer firefighters in New York State compared to 18,500 career firefighters.

Senator Breslin concluded, "Some fire departments and districts are facing recruitment shortages, this law will assist in recruiting men and women who wish to serve their communities, and help keep health care affordable."

This law takes effect immediately.

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