



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brian X. Foley

Senator Foley Helps Residents Rest Easy

BRIAN X. FOLEY May 20, 2010

Senator Brian X. Foley (D – Blue Point) hailed the passage in the senate of Senate Bill 7047, which would require polysomnographic technologists, who assist in the diagnosis of sleep disorders, to be licensed by the State Education Department.

Polysomnographic technologists play an integral role in the diagnosis of sleep disorders in patients. Their duties include gathering and analyzing patient information, ensuring the appropriate tests are performed, administering tests, which may involve the connection of electrodes, sensors, and air masks, monitoring, scoring and evaluating test results, and, ultimately, ensuring patient safety. The legislation would require the licensure and registration of the individuals in these positions, with an emphasis on ensuring that they are adequately educated, trained, supervised and regulated.

“Protecting the safety of our residents must be our utmost priority,” said Senator Foley.

“Requiring that any person who is performing tests on patients within a medical setting, particularly individuals who are involved in connecting electrodes and breathing equipment, is licensed is essential to ensuring that these individuals have received the proper training and are able to provide the highest quality of care. Hopefully, with the expansion of available training programs, we will see more people becoming licensed as polysomnographic technologists. We need to have more people in the field to assist in diagnosing sleep

disorders, so that residents may receive proper diagnosis and treatment, and hopefully avoid the many harmful side effects that can result from sleep disorders.”

Current estimates place the number of people suffering from sleep disorders at between 40 and 70 million, with an additional 20 to 30 million people suffering from intermittent sleep-related problems. There are over eighty classified sleep disorders, including insomnia, sleep apnea, restless leg syndrome, narcolepsy and parasomnias. It is believed that 95% of individuals suffering from sleep disorders are never diagnosed because many health care providers are not trained in how to diagnose and treat these disorders.

Sleep disorders can contribute to the development of serious illnesses. These illnesses include colon cancer, breast cancer, heart disease, stroke, diabetes, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and obesity. In addition, sleep-related vehicular accidents comprise around 20% of all vehicular accidents each year, and often result in death or serious injury.

There is also an economic impact as a result of sleep disorders. It is estimated that the employment absenteeism and decreased productivity that result from sleep disorders costs around \$150 billion each year. The indirect costs that are associated with accident litigation, destruction of property, medical care and death are thought to total between \$50 billion and \$100 billion annually.