



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Charles J. Fuschillo Jr.

Fuschillo Announces Final Legislative Approval of Legislation Assisting People WITH Lymphedema

CHARLES J. FUSCHILLO JR. June 9, 2010

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Senator Charles J. Fuschillo, Jr. (8th Senate District) announced that the State Senate has approved legislation he sponsors that will make information about lymphatic diseases more readily available to New Yorkers suffering from these diseases. The State Assembly has also passed the bill which now goes to Governor Paterson for consideration.

Senator Fuschillo, said, “A diagnosis of lymphedema can be frightening and confusing. Many people are unfamiliar with the symptoms and recommended treatments. This proposed law would ensure that patients with lymphedema can more easily access information that could help them cope and seek treatment.”

“On behalf of our organization 1 in 9: The Long Island Breast Cancer Action Coalition and the lymphedema patients we serve, we thank Senator Charles Fuschillo for introducing this bill. With no budgetary impact, this bill will now allow those who need to find help and information on the impact that lymphedema can have on an individual’s life. When we hear someone’s cry for help who does not know where to turn, we can now afford them the hope they deserve by directing them to the Department of Health website’s links to the National

Lymphedema and Lymphatic Disease Organization,” said Geri Barish, President of 1 in 9: The Long Island Breast Cancer Action Coalition.

Senator Fuschillo’s bill (S. 629-A):

- Requires the New York State Department of Health (DOH) to provide wellness education and outreach programs regarding lymphatic diseases including primary lymphedema, secondary lymphedema, lymphatic disease prevention, early diagnosis, options for treatment and therapy, long-term chronic care, the value of early detection, and other relevant information;

- Requires DOH to link through the department’s website to national lymphedema and lymphatic disease organizations;

- Includes lymphatic diseases in the definition of “children with physical disabilities,” so that they may receive appropriate attention and care to address any special needs.

Lymphedema is an accumulation of lymphatic fluid in the interstitial tissue that causes swelling, most often in the arm(s) or leg(s), and occasionally in other parts of the body.

Lymphedema can develop when lymphatic vessels are missing or impaired (primary), or when lymph vessels are damaged or lymph nodes removed (secondary).

Radiation therapy, used in the treatment of various cancers, can damage otherwise healthy lymph nodes and vessels causing scar tissue to form which interrupts the normal flow of the lymphatic fluid. Untreated, lymphedema can lead to a decrease or loss of functioning of the limbs, skin breakdown, and chronic infections. In the most severe cases, untreated lymphedema can develop into a rare form of lymphatic cancer.