



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Roy J. McDonald

Statement from Senator McDonald on Autism Insurance Legislation Passing the NY Senate

ROY J. MCDONALD June 17, 2011

| ISSUE: **MENTAL HEALTH, DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES**

| COMMITTEE: **MENTAL HEALTH**



“Families that need help paying medical bills for their loved ones can finally get the coverage they deserve,” Chairman of the Senate Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Committee Senator Roy McDonald (R, Saratoga) said. “Enactment of this bill will make New York a leader in providing services and ensuring protections for those with autism. I want to thank my colleagues in the Senate for passing this bill, and look forward to doing more to

help those with autism and similar developmental disabilities.”

-- Information on Autism Insurance Legislation --

The New York State Senate today approved legislation to enable individuals with autism spectrum disorders to receive insurance coverage for screening, diagnosis and treatment. The bill (S.4005A), sponsored by Senator Charles J. Fuschillo, Jr. (R, Merrick), would save tens of thousands of dollars in out-of-pocket expenses spent by families caring for individuals with autism and address insurance companies’ refusal to cover costs for autism treatments and therapies.

Autism Spectrum Disorders affect individuals of all ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic groups. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) estimates that 1 in 110 children, including 1 in 70 boys, are currently affected with autism.

The legislation requires insurance companies to provide coverage for the screening, diagnosis, and treatment of autism spectrum disorders, including behavioral health treatments, speech therapy, occupational therapy, and physical therapy. Insurance companies would be prohibited from terminating coverage or refusing to renew, adjust, amend, issue, or execute a policy solely because the individual has been diagnosed with or received treatment for autism spectrum disorders.