



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Dean G. Skelos

Senate Passes Bill to Allow Private Air Ambulance Services to Offer Membership Subscriptions

DEAN G. SKELOS June 20, 2011

The New York State Senate today passed legislation, sponsored by Senator Patricia Ritchie (R-C, Heuvelton), that would allow private air ambulance services to offer membership subscriptions to private air ambulance services. This proposal would help ensure the continuation of air ambulance services in rural areas of New York State.

“Many of New York's most rural areas can be hours away from trauma centers,” Senator Ritchie said. “Four years ago, northern New York lost the MEDEVAC services of the Military Assistance to Safety and Traffic unit at Fort Drum in Jefferson County. Now air ambulances come from Saranac Lake or Syracuse which severely lengthens response times and are weather dependent especially in the winter months. Like other areas of the State, the people and visitors of northern New York would greatly benefit from the presence of a professional air ambulance team.”

Senator Ritchie said that low call volume and the expense of running a full-time air ambulance service, has made it difficult to attract companies to New York's rural regions.

Allowing air ambulance companies to solicit membership subscriptions would mediate the high cost of doing business in New York.

“By enacting this legislation we recognize the need of rural communities in New York to have fast, effective emergency medical service,” Senate Majority Leader Dean G. Skelos said. “By attracting air ambulance companies to New York, we'll be filling a need for medical transport and service that saves lives.”

Under current law, soliciting of membership subscriptions for air ambulance services is considered a form of medical insurance. This bill (S.4712) amends the Insurance Law which includes a host of instances when certain parties are exempt from licensing and other requirements adds any private air ambulance service that solicits membership subscriptions, accepts membership applications, charges membership fees, and provides air ambulance services to the list.

The bill was sent to the Assembly.

###