



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John A. DeFrancisco

Oral Chemotherapy Bill Becomes Law

JOHN A. DEFRANCISCO September 25, 2011

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Senator John A. DeFrancisco (R-I-C Syracuse) announced that a new state law will require insurance companies to add chemotherapy in pill form to the list of treatments that must be covered by insurance, potentially saving patients thousands of dollars. “This law will allow a patient to undergo chemotherapy by taking medication orally at home instead of traveling to a hospital for the traditional intravenous or injectable forms of chemotherapy, and be assured that it will be covered by insurance,” said Senator DeFrancisco.

Many of the emerging and most effective cancer therapies are available only in pill form. In addition to the convenience of receiving the treatment in their own home, some patients also benefit by experiencing fewer side effects than they would with traditional chemotherapy.

Currently, many oral drugs are defined by insurance companies as a prescription drug treatment, leaving patients unable to get the treatment covered as a traditional chemotherapy treatment. This often results in patients paying thousands of dollars out-of-pocket because it is listed in the highest drug price category. If they are unable to pay for the drug, the oral chemotherapy option and its benefits are not accessible to the patient.

This law ends the cost discrepancy by requiring oral chemotherapies to be covered by insurance at a cost equal to intravenously-delivered chemotherapies. This bill takes effect January 1, 2012.