



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James S. Alesi

## April is Autism Spectrum Disorder Awareness Month

JAMES S. ALESI April 10, 2012

| ISSUE: **HEALTH**



While on Monday, April 2<sup>nd</sup> we observed the fifth annual “World Autism Awareness Day,” throughout April we celebrate “Autism Spectrum Disorder Awareness Month.”

These important dates provide us with a very special opportunity to continue our efforts to enhance public awareness about autism, and to work together to ensure that families and individuals have the support they need to overcome the serious challenges that autism can present.

I was proud to help enact a new law that will help provide families coping with autism access to critically important care and support. Under the new statute, which Governor Andrew Cuomo signed into law in November, health insurance companies are now required to provide coverage for the screening, diagnosis, and treatment of autism spectrum disorders. Insurance companies will also be prohibited from terminating or refusing to renew, change, or issue a policy solely because someone has autism.

With the enactment of this law, which takes effect on November 1, 2012, New York became the twenty-ninth state to require health insurance coverage for conditions relating to autism spectrum disorder.

When it comes to autism, early diagnosis and treatment is essential, and this important new law will help thousands of families across New York State who struggle to obtain -- and pay for -- proper care for loved ones affected by autism.

The challenges presented by autism continue to touch the lives of thousands of children and families in our local community. During Autism Spectrum Disorder Awareness Month, and indeed throughout the entire year, let's continue working together to help our families, friends and fellow New Yorkers overcome these tremendous challenges.