



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Gustavo Rivera

## State Senator Gustavo Rivera's Bill to Ensure a Family Member or Caretaker of an Incarcerated Person Is Able to Access Their Loved Ones' Medical Information Passes the Senate

GUSTAVO RIVERA June 19, 2015

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*Rivera and Blake's Legislation Goes to the Governor for his Signature*

(Albany, NY) - State Senator Gustavo Rivera and Assemblymember Michael Blake's bill to require the Department of Correction and Community Supervision (DOCCS) to provide medical information disclosure forms as a matter of routine to all incarcerated individuals upon arrival or transfer to a new facility passed the State Senate yesterday unanimously. This bill passed the Assembly on June 1st, 2015 and is now heading to the Governor for his signature.

In New York State, approximately 8,000 men and women who are in custody receive treatment for mental illness. There are also approximately 10,000 New Yorkers who are under the age of 25, some of whom have significant medical conditions. Family members of incarcerated individuals often times face obstacles in receiving information about the mental health and medical treatment of their loved ones while they are in the correctional system because disclosure forms signed by the incarcerated individual may have expired, may never have been signed, may have been difficult to obtain, or may not have traveled with the individual.

"In certain situations, the lack of communication between DOCCS and an incarcerated person's family or caretaker has had serious implications in determining the course of treatment they receive during a medical crisis," said **State Senator Gustavo Rivera**. "The passage of this bill will ensure that their family will be notified of any medical conditions that might arise in a timely manner so that they are able to be a source of information and support for both their loved one and DOCCS."

The bill also establishes that a copy of the disclosure forms will be provided to the incarcerated person's authorized designee. The incarcerated person have the right to decline,

edit or revoke their disclosure forms at any time.

"Families should know the physical and mental conditions of their loved ones who are incarcerated to get them the best possible care. While already being concerned for their justice, it is crucial to give these individuals, especially the 10,000 incarcerated young people under the age of 25, a chance for better healthcare and their families a better sense of peace," said **Assemblyman Michael Blake**.