



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Susan Serino

## SERINO WORKS TO MOVE STATE TO PROVIDE INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR CHRONIC LYME SUFFERERS

SUSAN SERINO March 27, 2018

| ISSUE: **LYME AND TICK-BORNE DISEASES**

| COMMITTEE: **TASK FORCE ON LYME AND TICK-BORNE DISEASES**



ALBANY, NY—Sue Serino (R, C, I—Hyde Park) today announced that her bill (S. 21698A) representing the first major step in addressing the issue of providing insurance coverage for those struggling with chronic Lyme and Tick-Borne Diseases (TBDs) has passed the Senate. The bill's language was also included in the NYS Senate's One House Budget Proposal that passed on March 14<sup>th</sup>.

*“A Lyme Disease diagnoses can not only be devastating for an individual’s health, but for their financial security as well,” said Senator Sue Serino. “I have heard story after story from those in our community who have spent thousands of dollars out of pocket and have taken on extensive debt to make ends meet as they seek treatment. It is time that the state recognizes the burden that far too many New Yorkers face as a result of a lack of insurance coverage for those struggling to recover from chronic Lyme and TBDs and this bill represents the first major step toward finding a solution that works for both patients and policy holders.”*

Under current NYS law, health insurance companies are not required to cover long-term treatment for those who suffer from chronic Lyme or other related diseases. As the Chair of the Senate Taskforce on Lyme and TBDs, Senator Serino has long championed this bill that would require the New York State Health Care Quality and Cost Containment Commission to meet and to submit a report on the potential impact of providing more comprehensive insurance coverage for Lyme and TBDs.

Established in 2007, the Commission was created to analyze the potential impacts of legislative proposals that would expand coverage to properly determine any potential impact on health insurance costs and quality before proposals are enacted. To date, the NYS Assembly has failed to appoint its two designated representatives, so the Commission has yet to meet to fulfill these critical duties.

Senator Serino’s bill, would expressly require the Commission to meet annually on the first Monday after the first of January to consider this issue. Further, it would statutorily require the Commission to submit a report to the Governor and the Legislature specifically addressing the impact that mandating the coverage of Lyme and TBDs would have on health insurance costs by May 1, 2019.

The bill passed unanimously once again.

