



MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT

A.6763a (Gottfried) / S.4691a (Fuschillo)

An act to extend medical assistance for individuals diagnosed with cancer when screened through state cancer services programs.

The American Cancer Society is dedicated to reducing disparities in access to cancer-related health care services and strongly supports New York's nation-leading programs that provide cancer screening for the uninsured (Healthy Women's Partnerships, Healthy Living Partnerships and Colorectal-Prostate Initiative).

In 2002, New York established treatment coverage for breast and cervical cancer (up to 250% of poverty). However, uninsured persons who are screened for colon cancer, or are referred for prostate cancer screening, and receive a positive diagnosis currently must seek charity care to cover treatment costs.

This gap in coverage causes financial hardship for patients, hospitals and physician providers. Local health officials and screening program managers must also invest time and resources for patient care navigation, often competing with demands of program outreach and education efforts.

In addition, the lack of coverage for treatment costs for colon and prostate cancer is a significant barrier to both patient and health care provider participation in screening programs. Exposure to uncompensated patient costs is a disincentive to recruitment of providers to offer screening and diagnostic services. More importantly, many patients either avoid screening opportunities due to fear of facing a diagnosis without the means to afford cancer care, or compromise their care due to lack of financial resources during treatment.

The proposed legislation would cap eligibility for screened individuals at 250% of the Federal Poverty Limit, the same standard used for breast and cervical cancer treatment coverage. The bill also ensures no local (i.e. county) share of non-federal reimbursed costs.

New York must strengthen its commitment to reducing the toll of colon and prostate cancer by extending treatment coverage to everyone who is screened through state-funded, local cancer screening programs.

The American Cancer Society strongly urges your support for S.4691/A6763.

For further information contact: Michael Bopp, NYS Director of Advocacy
Michael.Bopp@Cancer.org (518) 449-5438 x 11