



## NEW YORK STATE CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

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RICHARD E. BARNES  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

### MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT

**Re: A.10372-A, Morelle / S.7000-B, Breslin  
In Relation to expanding health insurance coverage for the screening,  
diagnosis and treatment of autism spectrum disorders**

The above-referenced bill requires health insurers to provide coverage for the treatment of “autism spectrum disorders”.

The New York State Catholic Conference **supports** this measure.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) estimates that 1 in 110 children have autism. Currently, state law requires that insurance coverage for autism "not exclude" the diagnosis and treatment of autism spectrum disorder. However, state law does not specify the scope of required coverage nor establish a regulatory process to promulgate rules which identify treatment and therapy options.

This legislation requires insurers to provide health coverage for persons with autism spectrum disorder throughout their entire lifetime, including case management. Importantly, the Commissioner of Health, in consultation with the Insurance Superintendent and the Commissioners of Mental Health and Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, is charged with responsibility for promulgating regulations identifying treatment and therapy options.

The Surgeon General has indicated that appropriate treatment for autism is paramount. In the absence of insurance, families with children suffering from autism are often required to pay out-of-pocket expenses for treatment with costs upwards of \$50,000. Sadly, many families cannot afford such treatment, and their autistic child goes untreated.

This important legislation will insure that thousands of children with received adequate and appropriate treatment for their potentially debilitating illness.

New York will join 21 other states in enactment of autism insurance legislation.

The Catholic Conference supports this legislation and urges passage.