



The Employer Alliance for Affordable Health Care

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MEMORANDUM IN OPPOSITION

Bill: S.784 (Fuschillo)/A.699 (Pheffer)

An Act to amend the insurance law, in relation to coverage for autism spectrum disorder.

The **Employer Alliance for Affordable Health Care**, a coalition of nearly 2,500 employers dedicated to keeping New York's health insurance affordable, opposes the passage of health insurance mandates until a proper independent analysis of the proposal is conducted. Mandated benefits in New York already add more than \$1,000 to all family policies offered in this state. This legislation will further increase costs by requiring unlimited coverage for services related to the treatment of autism spectrum disorders.

The Employer Alliance opposes the adoption of this legislation for the following reasons:

- Before adopting another mandated benefit, **the Legislature must pass implementing legislation to go with the \$300,000 appropriated in the 2006-07 budget to establish an independent Health Insurance Mandate Review Commission.** This commission would be charged with examining for cost and efficacy the nearly one hundred mandates currently introduced (including this one prior to legislative action).
- S.784/A.699 requires premium payers to subsidize non-health related treatments for autistic children. Specifically, this legislation mandates the coverage of numerous services that are not typically covered under health insurance including "behavioral and educational intervention programs." Coverage for services related to developmental disabilities is typically outside the purview of health insurance.
- This legislation is an open invitation to increased health care costs. Today, there are an estimated 425,000 autistic children in the United State and according to estimates the diagnosis is increasing by as much as 17% a year. These costs will be reflected in higher premiums and in turn, more uninsured New Yorkers.
- In their wisdom, the legislature rejected efforts to mandate these coverages for early intervention services for children from ages one to three. Extending such a mandate to cover children to age 18 would significantly increase the cost of health insurance.

As the Legislature wrestles with various proposals that seek to increase the number of insured New Yorkers, legislators must ensure that individuals with insurance maintain their coverage. Passing additional mandates, such as this proposal, will have the opposite effect - increasing health care costs and the number of uninsured.

For all these reasons, the Employer Alliance urges your opposition to this legislation.