

Dear

I am writing to call your attention and encourage your support of Bills S.4623 (Hannon) and A.7003 (Cusick) which would require insurance companies to cover treatment for drug and alcohol dependency.

At a time when illicit opiate use has grown exponentially, people suffering with addiction are denied from accessing medically necessary treatment due to insurance company denials. There are too many incidents where due to these denials, people ready for treatment have been seriously harmed. Insurance companies do not offer adequate coverage, use disparate assessment tools, offer inappropriate alternatives and disregard the clinical assessments recognized by the NYS Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS). Furthermore, these insurance denials are limited to New Yorkers; there are out of state folks coming to New York and successfully completing treatment because they are not subject to the arbitrary access-to-care decisions of an insurance company. This approach is unacceptable; coverage, duration of treatment and the determinants for levels of care should reflect patient need, and based on accepted clinical principles as designated by OASAS.

S.4623 and A.7003 rectifies this. The bills seek to amend NYS Insurance Law, requiring insurance companies to provide coverage and follow the clinical assessments determined by qualified personnel, a uniform process prescribed by OASAS.

It is important to note that besides excellent policy, these Bills bear *no* cost to the State.

I urge you to assist with these bills' passage.