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ROBERTS/VOSS/PRIETO BILL TO REQUIRE COVERAGE OF AUTISM & DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY TREATMENTS ONE STEP CLOSER TO BECOMING LAW

(TRENTON) – Assemblymen Joseph J. Roberts, Jr. and Vincent Prieto and Assemblywoman Joan Voss today commended the Senate for passing legislation they are sponsoring to make New Jersey the 14th state in the nation to require health insurers to cover treatments for autism and other developmental disabilities.

“Many New Jersey families already are being stretched to their financial edge – but without health coverage for their loved ones, countless families with an autistic child are bankrupting themselves to give their child the potential for a brighter future,” said Roberts (D-Camden). “Autistic and disabled adults who have not received the proper treatment will leave our families, communities and state with new and more expensive challenges.”

Federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention study based on research in 14 states found one in every 150 children diagnosed with autism, with New Jersey shaving the highest rate in the country with one in 94.

“Families that have a loved one with autism should not be expected to shoulder the financial hardships of this disorder alone,” said Prieto (D-Hudson). “By requiring health insurers to cover therapies for autistic children early in their lives ensures they receive the treatments they most need when it will make the greatest impact – oftentimes these therapies represent a new lease on life for autistic children and their families.”

“Early intervention including speech, physical and socialization therapy can make a world of a difference in the lives of young children with autism and other developmental disabilities,” said Voss. “Treating autism spectrum disorders early ensures that these children learn basic life skills, which can have lifelong impacts, oftentimes mitigating some of the challenges faced by many adults with autism.”

(MORE)

The measure (A-2238/S-1651) passed the full Senate 35 to 0. It now heads to the Assembly for votes to concur with the changes made in the Senate.

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