

Memo of Support

A.6396: Improve Insurance Coverage for Eating Disorders

The National Eating Disorders Association (NEDA) supports and urges the passage of A.6396/S.6045. This legislation, sponsored by Assemblywoman Nily Rozic and Senator Kathleen A. Marchione, closes a gap in coverage by requiring insurance companies to provide full coverage for the treatment of eating disorders. Eating disorders are real, complex, and devastating conditions that can have serious consequences for health, productivity, and relationships. The earlier a person with an eating disorder begins treatment, the greater the likelihood of physical and emotional recovery.

Please keep New York a leader in the field of eating disorders, and help all individuals receive access to the care that they need and deserve!

Eating disorders are serious, potentially life-threatening conditions:

- ✓ Eating disorders impact every organ system in the body, including cognition.
- ✓ If left untreated, they can damage the brain, liver, kidneys, GI tract, teeth, skin, hair, bones, and heart.
- ✓ Eating disorders can result in such medical conditions as retarded growth, osteoporosis, kidney problems, ulcers, and heart failure.
- ✓ For females 15-24 years old who suffer from anorexia, the mortality rate associated with the illness is twelve times higher than the death rate of all other causes of death.
- ✓ Anorexia has the highest premature fatality rate of any mental illness.

The prevalence of eating disorders is high:

- ✓ 30 million people will suffer from a clinically significant eating disorder at some point in their life.
- ✓ In American high schools, 30% of girls and 16% of boys suffer from disordered eating, including bingeing, vomiting, fasting, laxative and diet pill use, and compulsive exercise.
- ✓ Anorexia is the third most common chronic illness among adolescents.

The cost of care and burden on individuals and families is enormous:

- ✓ Treatment for an eating disorder can cost upwards of **\$30,000** per month.
- ✓ Despite mental health parity laws, insurance companies sometimes deny claims for care, and families are often forced into bankruptcy in order to help their loved ones obtain the care that they need.
- ✓ While eating disorders are extremely serious, recovery is possible. The proposed legislation would help ensure New Yorkers have access to adequate healthcare coverage for eating disorders, decreasing the chance of chronic illness and death.

NEDA urges support for this important initiative to improve the health and well-being of the countless individuals suffering with eating disorders in New York. For more information, contact Kerry Donohue at KDonohue@Nationaleatingdisorders.org.