

Memorandum in Support – A8824-A (Assemblymember Reyes)/S8334-A (Senator Gounardes)

American Nurses Association-New York (ANA-NY) is a professional nursing organization representing the interests of New York State's 270,000 registered nurses. ANA-NY advances the nursing profession by fostering high standards of nursing care, supporting the professional and educational advancement of nurses, and promoting the welfare of nurses to the end that all people may have better health care.

ANA-NY, on behalf of its members and their patients, strongly supports the passage of A8824-A/S8334-A, which would include vaccines against SARS CoVID-2 virus on the list of vaccines which the Commissioner of Insurance must mandate for coverage by health insurance providers within the State of New York and include vaccines against SARS CoVID-2 virus on the list of what Medicaid must cover for an enrollee who receives this vaccine at a pharmacy.

ANA-NY members do much more than treat ill patients. They promote public health and well-being. Vaccinations protect the individual and the public from life-threatening, preventable diseases. Healthy individuals, as well as the most vulnerable, benefit from vaccinations. Health care providers, patients, families, and caretakers benefit from becoming immunized; and registered nurses have a responsibility in advocating for necessary vaccines throughout an individuals' health care continuum.

Immunizations have eradicated major and life-threatening diseases such as smallpox and polio in the United States and controlled other serious infections, including diphtheria, measles, mumps, rubella, tetanus, and others. Vaccines are one of the greatest contributions to public health in the modern era, and data shows that vaccines are the reason why we see drastic decreases in vaccine-preventable diseases when compared with the pre-vaccine era. By getting immunized, we can protect ourselves, our families and our communities from serious, preventable illnesses. Getting vaccinated is a selfless act of prevention and can help build a community of immunity to protect those who may not be able to get vaccinated themselves.

What's important for people to know is that there hasn't been any new scientific discovery showing vaccines are unsafe or ineffective. The science hasn't changed — only some of the policy conversation around it has. In New York, vaccine recommendations, school immunization requirements, and clinical guidance remain grounded in long-standing medical evidence. We are still following the same science-based schedules that have been in place for years. We should continue to follow the science and ensure that there is insurance coverage for all vaccines that will help to prevent disease.

For the above reasons, ANA-NY **strongly supports** the passage of A8824-A/S8334-A, which will ensure insurance coverage for the SARS CoVID-2 vaccine.