News From The Assembly Democrats

LEGISLATION TO GUARANTEE FERTILITY SERVICES FOR PATIENTS UNDERGOING CERTAIN MEDICAL TREATMENTS PASSES FULL ASSEMBLY

Bill Would Help Patients Anticipating Infertility Due to Necessary Treatments

(TRENTON) In an effort to help preserve the ability of individuals to have children in the future when forced to undergo medically necessary treatment that may cause infertility, Assembly Democrats Pamela Lampitt, Britnee N. Timberlake, Gabriela Mosquera, Shavonda Sumter, Cleopatra Tucker and Verlina Reynolds-Jackson sponsor legislation that would require health insurance providers to cover fertility preservation services. The bill unanimously passed the full Assembly Monday.

Under current law, health insurance companies are not required to cover fertility services for patients who require medical treatments such as chemotherapy, radiation or surgery that could directly or indirectly damage their reproductive system. The legislation (A-3150) would guarantee insurance coverage for standard services such as gonadal shielding and embryo cryopreservation for patients receiving necessary treatments that might cause infertility.

"Being diagnosed with a serious health condition and deciding to undergo major medical treatment is stressful enough without having to worry about potential infertility as a result of the treatment," said Assemblywoman Lampitt (D-Camden, Burlington). "Having the option to utilize fertility services helps to provide patients with peace of mind and makes the decision to seek medical treatment a little easier."

By taking steps to protect reproductive organs or preserve genetic material, these services would give men and women the chance to have a biological child in the future when they would otherwise run the risk of losing their ability to have a baby.

"When someone requires a life-saving treatment, they shouldn't have to choose between daunting medical bills or never having a family," said Assemblywoman Timberlake (D-Essex, Passaic). "Guaranteeing insurance coverage is one way we can help alleviate patients' financial concerns and allow them to make their decision based on what they want rather than what they can afford."

To ensure coverage for all impacted patients, the bill specifies that these services cannot be denied due to the insured person's expected length of life, current or predicted disability, perceived quality of life or other health conditions and personal characteristics.

"As a mother, there is nothing in the world I value more than my children. Raising a child is such a rewarding experience," said Assemblywoman Mosquera (D-Camden, Gloucester). "This legislation will ensure that no one who dreams of being a parent will be denied that opportunity if there is any way for them to do so, regardless of their current health problems."

"Advancements in medical technology are providing patients with incredible alternatives they never would have had in the past," said Assemblywoman Sumter (D-Bergen, Passaic). "If someone wants to start a family of their own someday but may soon face infertility, it's important we help them achieve their dream by guaranteeing coverage of these beneficial fertility preservation services."
"Everyone deserves the chance to form a family of their own," said Assemblywoman Tucker (D-Essex). "In the past, the kinds of treatment cancer patients receive would have severely limited their ability to do so but that is no longer the case thanks to modern fertility preservation services. We must ensure their ability to use those services whenever necessary and desired."

"At a time when patients are coping with serious illnesses that can be both challenging and discouraging, knowing they can still have a family someday gives them hope," said Assemblywoman Reynolds-Jackson (D-Hunterdon, Mercer). "That kind of hope during such a difficult time is more powerful than many people can comprehend. I'm proud to support a bill that helps patients focus on the possibilities of life."

Having previously passed in the Senate, the bill will now head to the Governor.