
EMPLOYER ALLIANCE

NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2000

2000 STATE LEGISLATIVE SESSION CONCLUDES WITH VICTORIES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALLIANCE

The *Employer Alliance* scored several victories in the recently concluded state legislative session including the defeat of the expensive and irresponsible infertility mandate. *Alliance* members sent hundreds of opposition letters and faxes to key lawmakers, which helped turn the tide against this misguided legislation. Our preparation paid off. Because we had a strong anti-mandate coalition in place, we were able to successfully halt this dangerous mandate. Your efforts in defeating this bill will dampen the rising cost of health care in New York.

The *Alliance* also lead the attack on several other mandates including bills requiring insurance coverage for wide-scale bone density measurement screenings, social anxiety disorders and unlimited coverage for treatment of alcohol and substance abuse. Our message - that mandates have costs that compromise the ability of business to continue to provide coverage while exacerbating the number of uninsured, is starting to take hold.

ONE THAT GOT AWAY – “RUDY’S LAW”

Our successful session was marred by the passage of a broad prostate-screening mandate (S.976/A.5037). To many peoples surprise, the Senate passed this bill in the final hours of the session (it had passed the Assembly in April). Coined “Rudy’s Law” (in recognition of Mayor Guiliani’s public battle with prostate cancer), this proposal calls for broad prostate screening in men 50 years and older. It will be forwarded to the Governor for his approval (or veto) shortly.

Despite the bill’s almost unanimous passage in the Senate, the prostate mandate clearly demonstrates another reason why mandates should be thoroughly evaluated before passage. Because prostate screening is already widely available and covered, experts estimate that this would not be a costly mandate (less than \$20 million annually). However, mass screening as provided under this bill, is opposed by virtually

every major medical organization in the world including the *National Cancer Society*, *National Cancer Institute* and the *Centers for Disease Control* (See enclosed fact sheet on legislation). Had this bill undergone careful scrutiny to determine its costs *and* efficacy prior to passage, lawmakers would have known that the proposal was contrary to current medical science – which would have made the passage of this legislation less likely.

THE OPPORTUNITY

The *Employer Alliance* believes that the prostate mandate bill could be the key to the *Alliance* achieving one of its goals – mandate reform. We are working with many interest groups to urge the Governor not only to veto the prostate bill on scientific grounds, but just as important, to issue a statement with his veto urging the formation of a process by which mandates can be measured for efficacy and costs prior to enactment. “Because of the virtual medical consensus against broad screening, the Governor has a unique opportunity to take the high ground and demand greater accountability when it comes to passing health insurance mandates” said *Alliance* Chair Scott Miller “I urge every Alliance member to send a post card to the Governor today, urging him to institute mandate reform today (see “Action Alert”).

STUDY CORNER

A Duke University study found that the number of benefit mandates in a state significantly decreased the probability of having any private insurance. Specifically, the study showed that 20-25% of uninsured persons lack health insurance because of state mandates. A second study offered by Wayne State University and the University of Alabama, concluded that mandates have a direct impact on the number of uninsured people and further found that workers pay for mandates in the form of lower wages. Call the Alliance for copies of the studies.