



NEW YORK STATE PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
OF
THE JUNIOR LEAGUE

Junior Leagues of New York State:

Junior League of Binghamton
31 Front Street - Binghamton 13905

Junior League of Bronxville
P.O. Box 430 - Bronxville 10708

Junior League of Brooklyn
55 Pierrepont Street - Brooklyn 11201

Junior League of Buffalo
45 Elmwood Avenue - Buffalo 14201

Junior League of Central Westchester
1039 Post Road - Scarsdale 10583

Junior League of Elmira-Corning
P.O. Box 3150 - Elmira 14905

Junior League of Kingston
P.O. Box 1214 - Kingston 12402

Junior League of Long Island
1395 Old Northern Blvd - Roslyn 11576

Junior League of the City of New York
130 East 80th Street - New York 10021

Junior League of Northern Westchester
222 East Main Street - Mt. Kisco 10549

Junior League of Orange County
P.O. Box 515 - Middletown 10940

Junior League of Pelham
901 Pelhamdale Avenue - Pelham Manor 10803

Junior League of Poughkeepsie
794 Main Street - Poughkeepsie 12603

Junior League of Rochester
110 Linden Oaks, Suite A - Rochester 14625

Junior League of Schenectady
P.O. Box 857 - Schenectady 12301

Junior League of Syracuse
930 James Street - Syracuse 13203

Junior League of Troy
P.O. Box 1161 - Troy 12180

Junior League of Westchester on Hudson
35 South Broadway - Tarrytown 10591

Junior League of Westchester on Sound
149 Larchmont Avenue - Larchmont 10538

**For more information, contact the
Junior League nearest you.**

PROVIDE MENTAL HEALTH PARITY FOR HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE

Bill: A.2912

Sponsors: Assemblyman Tonko

NYSPAC Position: SUPPORT

The New York State Public Affairs Committee (NYSPAC) of the Junior League supports the enactment of "Timothy's Law," legislation that establishes mental health parity for health insurance coverage, and urges members of the New York State Senate and Assembly to support the passage of such legislation.

According to the Surgeon General, 28-30% of adults and over 20% of children have diagnosable mental or addictive disorders in any given year. The cost of these illnesses is high, in both human and economic terms. More than \$70 billion is lost in worker productivity every year due to mental illness. With adequate treatment, however, success rates for mental health patients range from 60-80%, higher than for patients with ailments such as heart disease, asthma and diabetes.

In New York State, insurers limit the number of inpatient and outpatient mental health visits per year and charge higher deductibles and co-payments for mental health and chemical dependency treatment than they do for treatment of physical health services. This can lead to financial hardship for families, and sometimes, as in the case of Timothy O'Clair, a boy who completed suicide in 2001 at the age of 12, dire consequences.

Offering mental health parity is highly affordable. It is estimated that the passage of such legislation in New York State would increase insurance premiums by only \$1.26 per employee each month, according to a study done by PricewaterhouseCoopers in 2002. And the economic benefits of such coverage offset this cost. Mental health parity, in conjunction with managed care, results in a 30-50% decrease in total mental health costs, according to the National Institutes of Health.

Nationwide, 35 states already require some form of mental health parity, and this has generally increased their health plan costs by approximately 1% or less in the short term, and has decreased over time.

We are in support of legislation requiring that adults and children with mental illnesses and serious emotional and behavioral disturbances as well as chemical dependence disorders receive the same health care coverage benefits as those provided for any other physical ailment.

On behalf of the over 7,000 women represented by the 19 Junior Leagues of New York, we urge the New York Assembly and Senate to support legislation enacting A.2912, legislation to establish mental health parity for health insurance coverage.

**For more information, contact: Nancy Proyect at 845-534-9688 or
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