

Memorandum in Support

S.6818 (Morahan) / A.10078 (Rivera)

An act to amend Timothy's Law to include the treatment of posttraumatic stress disorder

The Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy was a strong supporter of Timothy's Law which requires commercial insurance carriers in New York to provide coverage for the treatment of mental health and chemical dependency services at the same level as treatment of other health conditions. This legislation would expand that bill to include posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

PTSD is a psychiatric reaction to a traumatic event that can happen to anyone. It is a biologically based, *treatable* mental illness. Studies have shown that combat veterans may suffer from PTSD along with such populations as foster children, children who have been abused and victims of rape and other types of violence. There is a very real need to ensure that all persons, regardless of the type of trauma suffered, their age or type of medical coverage, have access to services that will help them recover.

Recent studies from the American Psychological Association and the Institute of Medicine have reported strong evidence in support of exposure therapy and on the efficacy of cognitive processing therapy. However, PTSD must be treated early in order to avoid ongoing symptoms and other compounding factors such as co morbidities and increased health care costs.

While the enactment of Timothy's Law in 2006 mandated comparable coverage for mental health treatment, it does not currently cover PTSD. Despite the development and availability of effective treatments, many New Yorkers are unable to access treatment services for PTSD because it is not covered by their health insurance and the out of pocket costs are too expensive.

S. 6818 / A.10078 would include post traumatic stress disorder under New York State's mental health parity law, known as Timothy's Law, and grant access to life saving treatment for all individuals suffering from PTSD. SCAA urges passage of this legislation.

Sincerely,



Karen Schimke
President and CEO

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