



MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT S.7881/A.10066

June 6, 2016

An ACT to amend the public health law and insurance law, in relation to maternal depression screening and referral performed by a provider of pediatric services.

The Postpartum Resource Center of New York, Inc. supports this bill which would amend existing Maternal Depression legislation to clarify that when maternal depression screening is provided by a pediatric provider, the “patient” is the child and the service is covered if the provider is in the child's health plan network.

Nearly 235,300 women delivered a baby in New York State in 2013 (New York State Department of Health, 2015). Of these, an estimated 10% - 20% experienced perinatal mood and anxiety disorders (PMAD-Maternal Depression) (Moses-Kolko & Roth, 2004; O’Hara & Swain, 1996; Stuart et al., 1998) – approximately 23,530 – 47,060 women in New York State experienced Maternal Depression. Moreover, children of mothers with Maternal Depression are more likely to experience mental health concerns, learning disabilities, cognitive impairment, conduct/behavioral issues, and/or developmental delays (Canadian Paediatric Society, 2004). Clearly, this issue concerns not just moms, but the entire family, and as a result, entire communities.

Although New York passed a Maternal Depression law in 2014 promoting maternal depression screening by pediatricians, further clarification is needed in order for this screening to readily be implemented by them. Confusion arose because Maternal Depression screening was not seen as a service for the child but rather for the mother who is not the pediatric patient despite Maternal Depression being a child's health issue.

With this technical fix, it will make it clear the maternal depression screening in pediatric practice is billable to the child's file and the pediatric provider is covered if he or she is in the child's health plan.

With supporting this legislation, New York State moms and babies will have a better opportunity to have maternal depression addressed and detrimental outcomes prevented from undetected maternal depression since the mother is more likely to see their child's pediatrician more times within the first 12 months after giving birth than their own healthcare provider.

This is why the Postpartum Resource Center of New York supports this critical bill S.7881/A.10066 in addressing the serious public health concern of Maternal Depression and urges its enactment.

For additional information:

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