

National Alliance on Mental Illness of New York State supports Assembly Bill 2025-A9659 / S 2655A, to ensure insurance coverage for pediatric acute-onset neuropsychiatric syndrome

NAMI New York State strongly supports passage of Assembly Bill A9659 & Senate Bill S2655A, sponsored by Assemblymember Cashman and Senator Stec, which would require health insurance plans in New York State to cover medically necessary rehabilitative treatment for pediatric acute-onset neuropsychiatric syndrome (PANS) and Pediatric Autoimmune Neuropsychiatric Disorders Associated with Streptococcal Infections (PANDAS), when certified by an attending physician. This legislation is a critical step toward ensuring that children affected by these serious conditions receive timely, appropriate, and comprehensive care.

PANS and PANDAS is characterized by the sudden onset of severe neuropsychiatric symptoms such as obsessive-compulsive behaviors, anxiety, depression, and significant functional impairment. In moderate to severe cases, children may become unable to attend school, leave their homes, or safely function in daily life. Without timely and effective treatment, these conditions can lead to long-term developmental consequences, psychiatric hospitalization, and increased risk of self-harm.

Despite the existence of evidence-informed clinical guidelines and effective treatment options—including Intravenous Immunoglobulin (IVIG)—many families face significant barriers to accessing care due to inconsistent or denied insurance coverage. These barriers often result in delayed treatment, worsening symptoms, and increased reliance on emergency departments and inpatient services that are not designed to address the underlying medical causes of PANS and PANDAS.

Ensuring coverage for medically necessary treatment is not only compassionate but cost-effective. Illinois, Arkansas, Minnesota, Tennessee, Colorado, and 30 other states have all mandated this coverage; and it is covered by Medicaid and Medicare. Evidence shows early and appropriate intervention can reduce the need for more intensive and costly services later, while significantly improving outcomes for affected children and their families.

I respectfully urge you to support and advance A9659/ S2655A to ensure that all children in New York have access to the care they need to recover and thrive.

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