



January 24, 2019

Assemblyman Kevin Cahill
LOB 716
Albany, NY 12248

Dear Assemblyman Cahill,

On behalf of United Ostomy Associations of America, Inc., thank you for your continued support and re-introduction of bill A00548 (formerly A01038/A1509), relating to the coverage of ostomy supplies in the NY Child Health Plus program. As the voice for patients with ostomies, we know first-hand how important this piece of legislation is to one of our most vulnerable populations, children, and strongly endorse these bills.

United Ostomy Associations of America, Inc. (UOAA) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that supports, empowers, and advocates for people who have had or who will have ostomy or continent diversion surgery. We have over 300 affiliated support groups across the United States, with 19 located in New York state. There are between 725,000 to one million Americans living with an ostomy or continent diversion, and over 100,000 new life-saving ostomy surgeries occur in America yearly.

Ostomy surgery may be needed by children who suffer from inflammatory bowel diseases such as Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis, birth defects, injury, cancer and other intestinal or urinary or gastroenterology medical conditions. After undergoing surgery patients rely on pouching systems for the collection of their bodily waste, sometimes for the rest of their life. This can be a traumatic and life-changing event for pediatric patients.

Having access to the ostomy supplies their growing bodies require means the difference between leading a perfectly normal life or being hospitalized and/or homebound. Quality of life and productivity are negatively impacted with an insufficient or unsuitable ostomy appliance. Without access to the proper products, patients may experience leakage and severe skin problems. Social non-acceptance may ensue due to leakage and unpleasant odor, potentially leading to isolation, depression and dependency. No child should have to endure this.

As you are aware, in 2014, New York signed into law a bill (S7893 in the Senate/A10140 in the Assembly) that requires all commercial major medical insurances to cover the provision of ostomy supplies, but New York's Child Health Plus program is not mandated to cover these essential supplies. This exclusion may lead to further cases of financial hardship for low-income NY residents. In addition, lack of access to ostomy supplies will often add to health care costs due to skin complications and infections leading to doctor

and emergency room visits and potential hospitalization for these children - - costs that could be avoided with access to proper products.

Like you, we want New York's children to be healthy and happy fully participating in school, active in sports and the arts, and whatever else helps them develop into young adults. UOAA supports your efforts to help these young ostomates and endorses bill A00548. **If we can be of assistance to you in any way, please contact Jeanine Gleba, UOAA's Advocacy Manager at advocacy@ostomy.org.**

Thank you for recognizing the importance of this issue and championing this important cause.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan Burns".

Susan Burns
President