NY Senate Passes Three Measures to Benefit HIV-Positive People

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Following an impassioned speech by openly gay and HIV-positive Senator Tom Duane (D-Manhattan), the New York State Senate passed three bills last week that will assist people living with HIV and improve HIV prevention efforts, Out in Buffalo reports.

According to the article, the bills include:

- The Family Healthcare Decision Act (FHCDA), which would allow family members and others close to a patient to decide on treatment if the patient is incapacitated and has not signed a healthcare proxy or left specific oral or written treatment instructions
- A bill that would authorize a New York Department of Health review of policies and practices regarding HIV, AIDS and hepatitis C virus in New York State correctional facilities.
- A bill that would place a cap on monthly rent payments for New York City HIV/AIDS Services Administration (HASA) clients at 30 percent of their monthly income

“The rent cap bill is a top priority of people living with HIV/AIDS in New York City, including [Gay Men’s Health Crisis’s] 15,000 clients,” said Sean Cahill, managing director of public policy for the Manhattan-based AIDS service organization. “This bill will allow people to stay in their homes and better afford to live in our expensive city. More stable housing will make it easier for people to maintain HIV treatment adherence and stay healthy.”

The Duane-backed rent cap bill passed by 52–1, while FHCDA—also sponsored by Duane—passed unanimously by 57–0. For the bill to become law, the state Assembly must still pass it, and the governor must sign it.

The bill concerning HIV, AIDS and hepatitis C in New York State correctional facilities—sponsored by Assembly member Dick Gottfried (D-Manhattan)—has already passed the Assembly.

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