

(H. B. 182)

(No. 165)

(Approved August 30, 2006)

AN ACT

To direct all health insurance companies in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico to include the vaccine against respiratory syncytial virus as part of their pediatrics coverage.

STATEMENT OF MOTIVES

Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) is a very common condition that presents symptoms similar to those of a cold, but which is potentially deadly for babies and children, if not properly treated.

This virus causes serious complications to premature babies born after less than 35 weeks of pregnancy, and to those that are born with congenital cardiac problems or that have congenital pulmonary problems, even if not born prematurely.

This virus is transmitted through air particles. Although it begins as a normal cold with nasal congestion and secretions, it develops into a persistent cough with pain and episodes of fever, turning the area around the mouth a shade of blue due to lack of oxygen, causing respiratory distress and sinking of the neck and the space between the ribs. This syndrome attacks the lungs, and since babies have immature lungs, they lack the necessary protection. If not treated on time, it may be deadly.

At present there is an injectable preventive drug that is administered as of the premature-born's first month of life. However, not all health

insurance companies or health services entities organized pursuant to Act No. 113 of June 2, 1976, as amended, and non-profit organizations organized pursuant to Act No. 152 of June 9, 1942, as amended, that underwrite health services insurance in Puerto Rico, cover said vaccine.

The Legislature of Puerto Rico deems it imperative to require that all insurers, health services organizations, health plans and non-profit organizations that underwrite health insurance services in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico include as part of their coverage the vaccine against respiratory syncytial virus, because it constitutes an indispensable mechanism for the protection of the health of our children.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF PUERTO RICO:

Section 1.- All health insurance companies in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico are hereby directed to include the vaccine against respiratory syncytial virus as part of their pediatrics coverage.

Section 2.- This Act shall take effect sixty (60) days after its approval.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify to the Secretary of State that the following Act No. 165 (H.B. 182) of the 4th Session of the 15th Legislature of Puerto Rico:

AN ACT to direct all health insurance companies in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico to include the vaccine against respiratory syncytial virus as part of their pediatrics coverage,

has been translated from Spanish to English and that the English version is correct.

In San Juan, Puerto Rico, today 2nd of November of 2006.

Francisco J. Domenech
Director