



The League of Women Voters of New York State
62 Grand Street, Albany, New York 12207
Phone: 518-465-4162 Fax: 518-465-0812
www.lwvny.org E-Mail: lwvny@lwvny.org

**THE LEAGUE
OF WOMEN VOTERS**
of New York State

MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT OF:
S.5000 / Duane

TO: Senate Health Committee
DATE: May 19, 2009

Subject: *An act to amend the public health law and the insurance law, in relation to cost-sharing, deductible or co-insurance for tier IV prescription drugs; and to amend the executive law, in relation to unlawful discriminatory practice in relation to tier IV prescription drugs.*

The League of Women Voters of New York State supports the above referenced bill that aims to improve the health of New Yorkers by ensuring that the most expensive prescription drugs remain accessible and affordable through commercial health insurance plan by prohibiting commercial health insurance plans from creating specialty tiers within their prescription drug formularies.

The ever increasing cost of tier IV prescription drugs through the practice of health plans and health insurance policies of imposing cost-sharing, deductible or co-insurance costs for tier IV prescription drugs limits their accessibility, particularly for people with chronic illness & for seniors, who need them the most. This tier IV formulary is new and places an additional cost sharing burden that inhibits access to critical medications needed to treat chronic, disabling conditions like Rheumatoid Arthritis, MS, breast and colorectal cancers, leukemia and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma that in many cases leads to sporadic and ultimately discontinued use of these necessary drugs. This legislation works to reduce these barriers and increase access to prescription drugs by outlawing these practices.

This legislation supports the League's position of access to quality health care and promoting better public health while also implementing cost-containment measures to achieve those goals.

For the above reasons, the League of Women Voters of New York State strongly urges your support of S.5000.