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TESTIMONY: UJA-FEDERATION OF NEW YORK

NYC Council, Committee on Health

Hearing on Resolution 1433-2017

Honorable Corey D. Johnson, Chair, Committee on Health

Submitted by:

Faith Behum, UJA-Federation of New York

June 27, 2017

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TESTIMONY: UJA-FEDERATION OF NEW YORK

NYC Council, Committee on Health Hearing on Resolution 1433-2017

Good afternoon Chairperson Johnson and members of the Committee on Health. My name is Faith Behum from UJA Federation of New York. Established 100 years ago, UJA is one of the nation's largest local philanthropies. Central to our mission is to care for those in need. We identify and meet the needs of New Yorkers of all backgrounds and Jews everywhere. We connect people to their communities and respond to crises in New York, Israel and around the world. We support nearly 100 nonprofit organizations serving those that are most vulnerable and in need of programs and services.

On behalf of UJA, our network of nonprofit partners and those we serve, I thank you for the opportunity to testify on Res. 1433-2017 which calls upon the New York State Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign A.528. If passed, this legislation would amend the New York State insurance law to include the coverage of in-vitro fertilization treatments. Statistics show that one in eight individuals or couples have trouble getting pregnant or sustaining a pregnancy. Infertility cuts across socioeconomic levels, and all racial, ethnic and religious lines. Medical conditions such as endometriosis, ovulation disorders, luteal phase defect, premature ovarian failure and male factor are some causes of infertility. The American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the World Health Organization recognize infertility as a disease. As such, infertility should be covered by health insurance like other diseases.

Cost is the number one barrier to seeking family building assistance, since 46% of affected people lack insurance coverage for infertility disease treatment. Since 1990, New York has required coverage of some infertility treatments in the commercial insurance market. However, current law does not require coverage for IVF, or in-vitro fertilization.

Passage of this bill would amend the insurance law, in relation to insurance coverage of in-vitro fertilization and other fertility preservation treatments and requires insurance coverage for IVF for large group policies. It adds a definition of infertility to the insurance law, which makes clear that infertility, is a disease as diagnosed by a licensed physician or by the failure to become pregnant after 12 months of regular, unprotected intercourse. The bill also provides for coverage of fertility preservation services when a medical treatment, such as cancer treatment, causes infertility. The bill also adds non-discrimination protections.

IVF is considered the standard of care for many persons seeking treatment for infertility disease. For many patients, IVF increases the chance of singleton births. A reduction in multiple births decreases health care and other costs and can result in healthier babies. In states that require coverage for infertility, including IVF, insurance premiums increased only slightly.

UJA-Federation of New York thanks Councilmember Levin for sponsoring Res. 1433 and for the Council's continued support of NYC residents to build their families. Please contact Faith Behum at Behumf@ujafedny.org if you have any questions. Thank you.