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[ORGANIZATION/AGENCY NAME]

MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT

S.5849 (Seward)

[Insert Organization's Information/Description, including where your members/supporters are located or provide services.]

[Insert Organization's Name] strongly supports the passage of this bill, which would establish the New York Health Benefit Exchange to provide lower cost health insurance for over a million New Yorkers, and enable New York to comply with the federal Affordable Care Act (ACA), passed in 2010.

S.5489 was the result of a "three-way agreement" between the Senate, Assembly and the Governor; the Assembly passed the companion version of this bill (A.8514) before the end of the regular 2011 legislative session. Rapid Senate action on this legislation is critical.

The passage of S.5489 would ensure that New York State has the support and infrastructure to provide an exchange that will meet the unique needs of state residents. If the state does not pass exchange legislation, under the terms of the ACA, a federally-operated exchange will be established in the state by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, making it much less likely that the needs of New York individuals and businesses will be taken into account.

[Insert Organization's Name] supports the creation of a single statewide exchange that: 1) includes quality, affordable benefit packages, 2) incorporates New York's public health insurance programs, 3) eases navigation for consumers and provides consumer representation, and 4) supports principles of health equity. S.5489 creates a framework that would allow the state to meet these essential standards.

Passage of legislation to establish a functioning exchange needs to happen quickly under the ACA to ensure that New York State remains eligible for over \$100 million dollars of federal funding and that gives the state enough time to ensure the exchange is operational on January 1, 2014, the date mandated under the federal law.

For further information, please contact ***[Insert Organization's Contact Information]***.