

Brookhaven Town Extends Health Insurance Benefits Eligibility for Active Volunteer Firefighters and Ambulance Workers

posted on 12/8/2010 3:42:31 PM

Farmingville, NY - Supervisor Mark Lesko and the Town Board announced that the Town will extend the New York State Health Insurance Plan (NYSHIP) eligibility to active volunteer firefighters and ambulance workers in Brookhaven Town. Those who are eligible can buy into the plan. Letters that explain the new program have already been sent to all Fire Departments and Ambulance Companies in Brookhaven Town.

"Our volunteer firefighters and ambulance workers serve such an important role in the community, and it is important that we do whatever we can to help them," said Supervisor Lesko. "By providing the opportunity to get health insurance for themselves and their families at no cost to the Town, we can relieve a burden for many first responders who don't have insurance."

"Volunteer first responders are crucial to the safety and well-being of the residents of this Town," said Councilwoman / Deputy Supervisor Kathleen Walsh. "It is only appropriate that they receive the same protections that they offer to all of us on a daily basis", she continued. "By having expanded health coverage, families can rest easy knowing that their loved ones are insured." Councilwoman Walsh also wished to give her thanks, "I would also like to recognize that this resolution was made possible by the dedicated work of the late Councilman Romaine and his staff; a testament to his unwavering support for our volunteer servicemen and women."

"I am very pleased that the Town of Brookhaven has the ability to offer quality health insurance to those volunteer firefighters and their families who answer the call to duty for all of the residents of the Town of Brookhaven," said Councilwoman Connie Kepert.

Councilwoman Jane Bonner said, "I am proud to be able to help our first responders who volunteer so much of their time to the community. They work so hard in the line of duty to protect and save lives and they rightfully deserve these important benefits."

"Our fire and ambulance service give of themselves every time they are called to service, and stand by while we sleep, in the case of emergency," commented Brookhaven Town Councilman Dan Panico. "This bill was sponsored by the late councilman Keith Romaine and passed unanimously giving eligibility to active volunteer firefighters and ambulance workers in Brookhaven Town to purchase health insurance at their cost."

"I commend our volunteer firefighters and ambulance workers who risk their lives every day and prove time and again how important they are to the community," said Councilman Tim Mazzei. "By providing them with the opportunity to get health benefits is one way to say thank you for the great service they perform."

Councilman Fiore- Rosenfeld said, "Our First Responders, the volunteer men and women, who protect our families and our homes deserve our whole-hearted support as a Township. This small but meaningful action will enable these active volunteers a viable means to secure health coverage."

"I'd like to thank the Supervisor and Town Board for extending health benefits to our firefighters and ambulance workers. This will be a great asset to them and their families," said Eugene Petricevich, First Vice President of the Brookhaven Town Fire District Officers Association.

In March of 2009, the Town Board unanimously adopted a resolution to extend health insurance benefits to volunteer firefighters and ambulance workers as soon as the New York State Civil Service law was amended to allow municipalities to extend such an offer. The law was amended by the State Senate and Assembly earlier this year and signed by Governor Paterson on May 7.

Any active volunteer firefighter or ambulance worker who buys into the plan will be responsible for the full cost of coverage and are subject to the rules and regulations of NYSHIP. This plan does not include retired or honorary members. Any active firefighters or ambulance workers who are eligible and would like to enroll in NYSHIP must schedule an appointment with the Town of Brookhaven's Personnel office at 631-451-6444.

Division of Public Information * Office of the Supervisor

One Independence Hill • Farmingville • NY 11738 • Phone (631) 451-6595 • Fax (631) 451-6258