

N.Y.'s health review law praised

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ALBANY — More than 2,000 people have won health coverage originally denied them by insurance companies under the state's 14-year old External Review Law, according to the Pataki administration.

The state insurance and health departments said that since July 1, 1999 when the law went into effect, 1,110 denials of coverage by health insurers were overturned completely, 267 denials were overturned in part and 722 denials were reversed voluntarily by insurers before a decision was rendered under the law.

Screeners rejected 1,427 appeal requests before they got to a hearing and 1,594 times reviewers hearing appeals sided with insurers and upheld the denial of coverage.

A spokeswoman for the New York health Plan association said the number of insurance decisions is small considering the fact that 10 million New Yorkers are covered by the law. □