

MEMORANDUM

S.2601 (Serino)

AN ACT to amend the social services law, in relation to supplemental security income for eligible individuals receiving enhanced residential care

This legislation, if enacted, would increase needed funds to enable Adult Care Facilities (ACFs) to continue to care for recipients who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI). While ACF operational and workforce costs continue to climb, there has been no commensurate increase in the State supplement to Congregate Care Level 3 SSI payments. The current SSI rate of just under \$41 per day is not adequate to pay for the services that an ACF must, by regulation, provide. These services include personal care, assistance with medications, case management, housekeeping, meals, activities, and more.

The State has not increased its share of the SSI rate in *12 years*, and before that, it was *17 years*. Such infrequent, unpredictable increases have made it extremely difficult for ACFs to serve low-income seniors. S.2601 (Serino) would provide for an SSI rate increase of \$20 per resident per day over five years, ensuring that these facilities can continue to serve this population.

At a time when State and federal policy points to serving people in home and community-based settings, this is a critical policy issue. If ACFs close or can no longer afford to serve SSI recipients, those residents are likely to go to a nursing home unnecessarily, at great cost to the State's Medicaid program. Clearly, it is less expensive to the State, and more consistent with the State and federal policy objectives, to prevent unnecessary institutionalization. Increasing the SSI rate will ultimately save Medicaid dollars and ensure that seniors have the highest quality of life possible.

For these reasons, LeadingAge New York supports S.2601 (Serino) and urges that this legislation be passed.

LeadingAge New York represents nearly 500 not-for-profit and public long-term care providers, including nursing homes, home care agencies, senior housing, retirement communities, assisted living, adult care facilities, adult day health care and managed long term care.