



SENIOR HOUSING

SENIOR HOUSING | ASSISTED LIVING | ADULT CARE FACILITIES | HOME CARE | RETIREMENT COMMUNITIES
ADULT DAY HEALTH CARE | PACE/MLTC | NURSING HOMES | CCRC

Affordable Independent Senior Housing Assistance Program

Proposal: Appropriate \$10 million over five years for the Affordable Independent Senior Housing Assistance Program, to establish new programs in existing and new affordable senior housing. Resident assistance provided under this program would include an array of services that promote healthy living by extending independence and improving quality of life. This \$10 million could be used by both existing and newly-created developments such as those created under HCR's new "Senior Housing Program," which was designed to facilitate the disbursement of the \$125 million in new funding for senior housing. Pairing this funding with senior housing would create a very cost-effective model for seniors to age in place in either new housing constructed for them or the preexisting housing where they reside. This would result in a savings to the Medicaid program by keeping low-income seniors out of more costly levels of care such as assisted living or nursing homes.

Background: For many years, operators of senior housing have been able to access federal dollars for resident assistants through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Research has shown that resident assistance programs in senior housing promote emotional well-being and stronger social supports, higher resident awareness of services, and better linkages between residents and needed services. Unfortunately, the HUD funding never met the demand for resident assistance programs across New York State and has been reduced significantly in recent years. Without State investment, this successful model may become extinct.

Service Examples: Resident assistants would provide so-called "light-touch" services that may include: (1) establishing and maintaining networking relationships with community-based services and organizations; (2) providing residents with information and referral lists for community services, and assisting them with follow-ups; (3) arranging for educational and socialization programs for residents; (4) helping residents arrange for housekeeping, shopping, transportation, meals-on-wheels, cooking, and laundry services; (5) establishing resident safety programs; and (6) advocating for residents.

Cost Effective: Funding would provide resident assistants for existing and new senior housing financed by HCR, at an annual cost of approximately \$70,000 per 100 residents. This strategic and modest investment would allow residents to remain in their homes and age in place, connecting them to outside health, wellness, and other supports, and delaying or preventing reliance on high-cost Medicaid services.

Proven Savings: Resident assistants in senior housing reduce health care costs. Findings released by New York City-based Selfhelp Community Services in 2017 demonstrate that residents living in their affordable senior housing with services were approximately 68 percent less likely to be hospitalized than the comparison group, and the average Medicaid payment per person, per hospitalization was \$1,778 for Selfhelp residents, versus \$5,715 for the comparison group. Furthermore, a 2016 study of residents in affordable housing in Oregon showed that Medicaid costs declined by 16 percent just one year after seniors moved into affordable housing communities with resident assistance programs.

Support the healthy aging of New York State's senior population by making strategic investments in the Affordable Independent Senior Housing Assistance Program!

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