

Support Adult Care Facility (ACF) Providers that Serve Low-Income Seniors

Increase the Congregate Care Level 3 Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Rate for ACF Residents

The Level 3 SSI rate pays just under \$41 per day for ACFs to provide residents with housing, meals, personal care, assistance with medication administration, case management, housekeeping, activities, and more. Based on an analysis of 2015 data, this funding falls about \$42 short of the average daily cost of providing ACF services. We know this gap has only grown as the minimum wage mandate has been phased in and other costs continue to rise. The State has not increased its share of the SSI rate in 11 years, and many ACFs serving low-income seniors are in financial distress. If they close or have to turn away SSI/Medicaid-eligible seniors, many of these individuals will be placed in nursing homes at higher cost to the State.

Our request: Increase the Level 3 SSI rate by at least \$20 per day per resident, and institute an annual cost of living adjustment to the State portion of the rate thereafter.

Support and Enhance the Executive Proposals to Expand the Assisted Living Program (ALP)

The ALP is an alternative to a nursing home for lower-acuity seniors, providing services at approximately half the cost. It is the only Medicaid assisted living option in the state. This cost-saving program should be expanded to allow eligible applicants that can demonstrate need to develop new ALP beds. In addition, existing ALPs should be able to expand their programs by nine or fewer beds through an expedited process.

Our request: We were pleased to see the Executive proposals to expand the ALP. We urge the Legislature to expand on these proposals by establishing a needs-based application process to enable rational expansion of the ALP in the future.

Support the Executive Proposal to Provide ALPs with Access to Existing Capital Funds

ALPs, like many other Medicaid providers, are struggling financially and need financial support to address infrastructure needs to best serve our aging population. Allowing ALPs access to capital funds can enable them to update their buildings to better serve people with Alzheimer's and other dementias, and provide better integrated care more efficiently. The funds could also be used to support the development of new programs in areas where there is a lack of services. These investments could save Medicaid dollars by preventing nursing home placements.

Our request: Support the Executive proposal to include the ALP as an eligible applicant for the Statewide Health Care Facility Transformation Program, and ensure that a portion of the funding goes to those providers.

Reinstate and Level Fund the Enriched Housing Subsidy

The Executive Budget again moves the Enriched Housing Subsidy program to a pool of public health programs, with aggregate funding reduced by 20 percent. This small program was *already cut by 20 percent* last year. The subsidy supports low-income individuals to remain in the most independent setting possible. Many of the Enriched Housing programs it supports are struggling financially, and if they close, these Medicaid-eligible residents are at risk of nursing home placement.

Our request: Restore the Enriched Housing Subsidy as discrete line item, funded at last year's level of \$380,000.

Allow ALP Residents to Access Hospice Services

Current Medicaid policy prevents terminally ill ALP residents from accessing hospice services. As a result, many are forced to transfer to a nursing home in their last weeks of life. If ALP residents were permitted to access hospice services, they would be able to remain in their homes at the end of life, and the Medicaid program would save an estimated \$1.3 million.

Our request: Pass legislation to implement policy and reimbursement mechanisms to enable residents of ALPs to access hospice services without having to be removed from the ALP.

Assisted Living Voucher Program for People with Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia

Currently, there are limited options for consumers in New York who have specialized and intensive care needs related to dementia and limited income and resources. Oftentimes, nursing home placement is the only option. We are pleased to see an interest in this issue with an assisted living voucher program for people with dementia included in the Executive Budget. There are many aspects of the program that would need to be determined, however, and it is critical that assisted living providers are included in the development of the program. In addition, we urge the Legislature to consider implementing a Medicaid dementia rate add-on to the Medicaid ALP rate, as is done in the nursing home rate, to cover the additional resources needed to care for this population. A modest investment could save significant Medicaid dollars by reducing the number of Medicaid-eligible people with dementia in nursing homes.

Our request: Work with LeadingAge New York, the Alzheimer's Association, and other provider and consumer groups to further develop strategies for low-income seniors with dementia to access assisted living.

Maintain Level Funding for EQUAL

The Executive Budget maintains level funding of \$6.5 million for a quality funding program for ACFs: the Enhancing the Quality of Adult Living (EQUAL) program. EQUAL supports quality of life initiatives for ACFs with SSI/Medicaid-eligible residents.

Our request: Maintain the Executive proposal to level fund EQUAL at \$6.5 million.