

MEMORANDUM

S.1967 (Rivera)

AN ACT to amend the social services law, in relation to reimbursement of transportation costs for certain enrollees under Medicaid

LeadingAge NY supports this legislation that would maintain the non-emergency medical transportation benefit in the Managed Long Term Care (MLTC) benefit package. This bill would reverse the provision enacted as part of the Medicaid Redesign Team 2 process in the FY21 State Budget that transferred responsibility for MLTC plan member transportation from the plan to the state's transportation broker. The action occurred as the state was experiencing financial challenges, a situation that has since changed. It was identified as driving a modest savings of \$8 million. Notably, the Legislature had rejected the Executive carve-out proposal annually for several years during the Cuomo administration until it was included in a set of MRT2 proposals portrayed as a single package.

Many MLTC plans have invested in their own vehicles to provide transportation services, and others have long-standing contracts with high-quality transportation providers. Some plans operate their own fleet of vehicles and/or prefer to oversee transportation closely as part of overall care management and supports for members. This allows them to deliver personally-tailored transportation to the frail elderly and disabled individuals whom they serve. The State's contractors are often unable to deliver the same level of service, resulting in lengthy waits, stranded clients, and missed medical appointments.

The small financial impact combined with a significant quality of care impact of maintaining transportation under plan control argue in favor of this bill. So does the fact that the pandemic has delayed implementation of this MRT provision. As a result, reversing the carve-out would provide continuity of existing practice for MLTC members and ensure that plans have greater control of a service that impacts the quality of care that their members receive.

For these reasons, LeadingAge NY supports S.1967 (Rivera) and urges that it be adopted.

LeadingAge New York represents over 400 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.

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