

MEMORANDUM

A.9418-A (Paulin)/S.8635-B (Fernandez)

An act to amend the social services law and the public health law, in relation to a special needs assisted living demonstration program

LeadingAge New York supports this legislation, which will establish and fund up to three demonstration special needs assisted living programs (ALPs) in New York. This demonstration would enable ALPs to care for individuals with dementia and other cognitive impairments who currently are unable to be served in the ALP setting due to their specialized care needs. This option would prevent or reduce nursing home placement and enable people with dementia to live in the most integrated setting possible.

Currently, there are limited options for Medicaid-eligible consumers in New York who have dementia-related specialized care needs. Many older adults with dementia who have the financial means are able to thrive in Special Needs Assisted Living Residences (SNALRs). SNALRs are assisted living settings specially designed to care for individuals with dementia. Unfortunately, SNALRs are not Medicaid providers. The lack of specialized services and programming options for Medicaid-eligible individuals with dementia in assisted living often forces this population to move into a nursing home to receive the dementia-related assistance they need, despite the individual being in otherwise good physical health. This comes at a higher cost to the state.

Nursing homes are already struggling to accommodate the ever-growing demand for their services in New York. The state should ensure that those who can be served in less restrictive setting are indeed afforded that option. This demonstration addresses that goal and would demonstrate the potential to save the state significant Medicaid dollars if fully implemented statewide.

Establishing and funding a demonstration program as outlined in A.9418-A (Paulin)/S.8635-B (Fernandez) would simultaneously enable ALPs to better serve older adults living with dementia and demonstrate the effectiveness of lower-cost diversion from nursing home placement. This demonstration will quickly prove its potential to save the State significant Medicaid dollars while offering people with dementia an opportunity to thrive in a less restrictive setting.

For these reasons, we support A.9418-A (Paulin)/S.8635-B (Fernandez) and urge that it be passed immediately.

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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