

MEMORANDUM

A.3674-A (Pretlow)/S.5969-A (Harckham)

AN ACT to amend the public health law, in relation to medically fragile young adults and pediatric specialized nursing facilities

LeadingAge New York supports this legislation, which would allow medically fragile young adults who reside in pediatric specialized nursing facilities to remain at such facilities after reaching the age of 21 and until they reach the age 36. Unless a higher reimbursement rate is expressly authorized by the department, the reimbursement rate and methodology for such medically-fragile young adults would remain the same as it was prior to reaching age 21. This legislation would ensure that medically-fragile individuals who have lived in a pediatric nursing facility are not forced to leave their homes and caregivers when they reach age 21.

Advances in medical technology have led to an increasing number of children residing in pediatric nursing homes surviving past infancy and early childhood, into adolescence and even adulthood. These individuals have a wide range of complex medical conditions which require specialized nursing home care. Under existing law and regulations, once they reach age 21, most medically-fragile children should be discharged from the pediatric facilities that have been their homes and moved to nursing homes that serve primarily geriatric residents.

This transition can be traumatic for vulnerable young adults. Not only are the social needs of the medically-fragile young adult different from the typical geriatric nursing home resident, their medical needs are more complex and extensive. For example, many require ventilators and feeding tubes. Nursing homes that serve primarily geriatric residents may have limited experience in providing the extensive nursing, medical, psychological, and counseling support services appropriate to the needs of young adults with medical fragility. Sadly, an estimated 30 percent or more of young adults with highly complex medical conditions die within the first 12 months of discharge from their pediatric facility. Continuity of specialized nursing facility care is vitally important to these individuals.

This legislation would ensure continued access to this needed specialty care by allowing existing young adult residents to remain in their home facility, at the same level of support from the State.

For these reasons, LeadingAge NY supports A.3674-A (Pretlow)/S.5969-A (Harckham) 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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