

December 5, 2025

The Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor
NYS State Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

Re: A.5155 (Stern)/S.7129 (Martinez)

Dear Governor Hochul,

LeadingAge New York and its not-for-profit, mission-driven members write to you today in support of A.5155 (Stern)/S.7129 (Martinez). This legislation would require the New York State Department of Veterans' Services, in consultation with the Department of Health, to undertake a study regarding veteran healthcare including specific health care issues related to women veterans and general access to quality health and mental health care for veterans and their families. The study would evaluate whether the needs of veterans and their families are being met by existing healthcare and veterans' programs and would provide recommendations for steps that could be taken to increase access to affordable, quality healthcare. LeadingAge New York supports the goals of this legislation, and recommends that the study include a review of access to critical long-term care services with respect to aging veterans who may have evolving or increasing health care needs.

LeadingAge New York represents the State's five veteran's homes offering skilled nursing services to individuals who have served our country. These five state-operated veteran's homes have a total of 1,220 certified beds. While many veterans are fortunate to receive care in one of New York's veteran's homes, there are many veterans who receive support and care via other nursing homes, assisted living, adult care facilities, home care agencies or adult day health care programs. While this legislation aims to enhance veterans' access to quality health care services, it does not address long-term care and aging specifically. Meanwhile, most veterans and their families will indeed need these services as they age and their needs change.

Access to quality nursing home care, regardless of veteran status, is becoming increasingly challenged. New York's nursing homes are being forced to limit admissions, take beds offline, and close entirely due to inadequate funding and staffing shortages. Home care agencies are also experiencing long wait lists for services. The lack of access to post-acute care services to which hospitals can safely discharge patients is contributing both to the quality of care for these individuals, and to over-crowded emergency departments and growing hospital wait times.

To ensure adequate access to care for our veterans, it is crucial that we understand the disproportionate health issues that affect them and the scope of the unmet need, including the needs of older veterans. This legislation would mandate a comprehensive study regarding the current conditions of veteran healthcare and report their findings to the legislature. Additionally, the study would explore the use of

designated healthcare navigators, which would be a great resource to assist veterans with navigating the complexities of the long-term healthcare system and its benefits.

This legislation is a thoughtful initiative that could improve access to specialty care by enhancing healthcare programs and services to better suit the current needs of veterans and their families across the country.

For these reasons, LeadingAge NY supports A.5155 (Stern)/S.7129 (Martinez) and recommends that long-term care be included in the study of available veterans' healthcare services.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. Barrett". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Sebrina" and last name "Barrett" clearly distinguishable.

Sebrina Barrett
President & CEO
LeadingAge New York