

Medicaid Changes Are Needed!

The number of caregivers who will need to file for Medicaid for the elderly parents will increase dramatically as the number of Americans entering retirement age is expected to nearly double by 2030, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration on Aging.

More Medicaid applications will need to be filed for our parents, and perhaps even ourselves. The process must be made easier. Many people cannot afford the cost of an attorney to file applications on behalf of their loved ones.

The Long Island Senior Education Council, a not-for-profit learning and resource organization, has spoken with many desperate caregivers who cannot afford paying for an attorney to file for Medicaid for a spouse or parent. As well, nursing homes are sure to experience financial burdens due to a lengthy Medicaid application process. The devastation of increasingly denied Medicaid applications is a mutual problem. Taxpayers need the benefits their loved ones deserve. Nursing home facilities and hospitals deserve the payments they are entitled to.

New York State and our counties are becoming overloaded with new Medicaid applications. As one caseworker admitted, "There were thousands of papers going back and forth." The Long Island Senior Education Council understands that Social Service's offices are made of people just trying to do their jobs. However errors, too much discretion or seemingly unfair denials can cost taxpayers thousands of dollars and caregivers unnecessary emotional stress. Changes are needed! In fact Suffolk County was recently sued by the Empire Justice Center and the National Center for Law and Economic Justice (NCLEJ) for apparently violating a 2009 court order to ensure an adequate Medicaid eligibility process.

We are asking for your support to address the NYS Commissioner with the hope that we can have our voices collectively heard.

PROPOSED MEDICAID APPLICATION PROCESSING CHANGES:

- Caregivers should have 10 *business* days to respond to a pending request letter.
- Social Services should have 10 business days after the dated acknowledgement to contact the caregiver.
- In certain cases, give caseworkers access to bank or financial accounts directly which could eliminate unnecessary paperwork.
- Postmarks should be considered in mailed response times, as guided by Internal Revenue Service rules.
- Caregivers should be given more vocal instructions of their rights, especially if information requested is unattainable.
 - A senior must go through a three hour consultation before a Reverse Mortgage process can begin. If filing a Medicaid application without attorney assistance, caregivers should be given more vocal instructions. The consequence of denials can be significant, in having to deal with collection agencies and law suits. It is financially devastating if caregivers are not fully aware of their rights.
- Caseworkers and Fair Hearings should have an independent review board.

The process should be made easier and fair. Let's keep in mind that many caregivers are also feeling the stress of a stubborn slow growing economy. We believe together, we can help caregivers feel less stress and help the facilities who care for the patients to receive the funds they need to continue to operate. Help LISEC with your support. Tell your elected officials Medicaid reform is needed. Let us know of your questions and concerns. We look forward to hearing from you!!

Always,

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SEND YOUR COMMENTS TO

Congressman Steve Israel Fx: 631-951-3308

Legislator Tom Cilmi

Email: Tom.cilmi@suffolkcountyny.gov

Governor Cuomo Ph: 518-474-8390

Legislator Tom Barraga

Email: Thomas.Barraga@suffolkcountyny.gov

Write to Gov. Cuomo The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building Albany, NY 12224

Legislator Lee Zeldin

Email: Zeldin@nysenate.gov

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Comments: I Support Medicaid Application Reform

Date: _____

Your Name: _____

Contact Information: _____
