

https://buffalonews.com/opinion/another-voice-nursing-home-residents-have-once-again-been-left-behind-by-new-york/article_237dc15c-0d48-11ef-8623-171c6bf4e469.html

Another Voice/Older adults

Another Voice: Nursing home residents have once again been left behind by New York

Michael S. King

May 11, 2024

As the dust settles on the finalization of the New York State budget, it has become abundantly clear that Gov. Kathy Hochul does not prioritize older adults. The recently approved Medicaid budget falls woefully short of aiding our most frail and vulnerable.

While I applaud the efforts of our local members of the Legislature who championed the fight for adequate funding for older adults, the Governor's failure to prioritize nursing home residents and long-term care is shameful.

Inadequate Medicaid rates make it impossible for nursing homes to recruit and retain staff, keep beds open and invest in the quality of life and care that residents deserve. New York's neglect has created a health care crisis that's on fire and poses serious threats to everyone who needs access to care.



Mi

In addition, the budget serves as a reflection of NYS priorities. Governor Hochul's budget has made it obvious that the state's fast-growing population of older adults is not a priority.

People are also reading...

- 1 Alan Pergament: John Murphy retiring as Bills play-by-play announcer as his recovery from stroke continues**
 - 2 Tommy Cowan, Buffalo restaurateur who owned Doc Sullivan's, dies**
 - 3 Fan suffers 'catastrophic' injury in Mohawk Place concert stage-diving incident**
 - 4 Orchard Park woman charged with fraud over \$8M deal for face masks she never delivered**
-

Despite a nominal Medicaid increase approved this year, the inadequacy of the overall Medicaid rate is devastating — especially when coupled with additional significant rate cuts to nursing homes within this budget.

1. The NYS budget has enacted a 10% cut to nursing home capital rates. These capital dollars are reinvested in facilities to cover care-related infrastructure expenses, such as new buildings, new beds, HVAC systems, etc. These capital expenses are either preauthorized or required by New York with the understanding and agreement that the state will reimburse facilities in their capital rates. With this retrospective 10% capital cut, investments have already been made and purchases completed, effectively breaking the agreement. To illustrate, imagine buying a home seven years ago with a fixed mortgage at a 3% interest rate, only to receive a letter today informing you that your fixed mortgage interest rate is now 7%.

2. During the intense pandemic years of 2020-23, almost all regulations were waived and revised to account for challenges we all faced during this crisis. Unfortunately for nursing homes in New York, the state is now enforcing a decades-old regulation that

says if a nursing home falls below 90% occupancy, the organization will be “imputed” up to 90%. This means that nursing homes are again being penalized and are now incurring thousands of dollars in rate cuts because the state has not enacted a waiver. I want to thank all the residents, families, staff and legislators who advocated tirelessly for adequate funding for long-term care. Unfortunately, we hit a stone wall with the Governor and her staff. Now more nursing homes will close, families will travel farther to visit loved ones and our health care system will continue to burn. New York is shortchanging its most vulnerable residents.

Michael S. King is President and CEO, Jewish Home.