HCANYS
Home Care Association of New York State

Alfredo Cardillo
HCA President and CEO

Rebecca Fuller Gray
Executive Vice President, Clinical & Program Affairs

Patrick Conole
Vice President, Finance & Management

Jan Van DeCarr
Assistant Vice President, Policy & Advocacy

Celisia Street
Vice President, Workforce Development & Innovation

Arianna Stone
Director, Research & Development

Brandon Vogel
Director, Communications

Taylor Perre
Associate Director of Policy & Advocacy

The mission of the Home Care Association of New York State, Inc (HCANYS) is to promote and enhance the quality and accessibility of health care and support at home.

HCANYS, New York State's premier home care association, represents over 300 providers, health plans, organizations and individuals who collectively provide healthcare at home to hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers.

HCANYS Members include:
- Certified Home Health Agencies
- Licensed Home Care Service Agencies
- Long Term Home Health Care Programs
- Hospices
- Managed Long Term Care Plans
- Waiver programs, allied health & health management organizations, and others

MEMORANDUM

TO: HCANYS Members

SUBJECT: 2025 State of the State Address: Home Care Association of New York State – Staff Summary

DATE: January 17, 2025

On January 14, 2025, Governor Hochul presented her fourth State of the State address in Albany. Her message extensively focused on proposed new economic supports to help the affordability of goods and on measures to address New Yorkers' concerns for public safety and protection.

The content of the speech itself did not address any proposals to home care itself; however, the Governor's State of the State Policy Book that accompanied her speech did include several proposals directed to and/or impacting home care and are described in this summary.

The Policy Book outlines the Governor's priorities that we can expect to see translated into legislative initiatives in her Executive Budget proposal anticipated at the end of this month. Below are highlights of the Governor's proposals from the Policy Book first highlighting several home care specific items, and then further organized by substantive category.

Home Care/Hospice/MLTC-PACE Related Proposals

Improve Data Transparency of Home Care Services

- Strengthen health plan networks adequacy standards through the Department of Health to update New York's outdated network adequacy requirements, address regional disparities, and enhance enforcement through improved monitoring and penalties ensuring timely access to in-network providers and reducing risk of medical debt for consumers.

Hospital at Home

- Introduce legislation to allow the Medicaid program to cover hospital at home programs, which allow hospitals to deliver inpatient care in home in clinically appropriate circumstances.

CDPAP/FI

- There was no mention or reference to any CDPAP or FI issues in either the Governor's written prepared remarks, the speech itself (as delivered), or Policy Book.

Health Care System Changes

- Expand access to emergency medical services by introducing legislation to define EMS as an essential service requiring counties to ensure all residents have adequate access to services and require county EMS mapping that allows New Yorkers to identify and fill gaps in coverage.
- Extend the Safety Net Transformation Program, which provides financial support and regulatory flexibility to encourage strategic partnerships and strengthen hospital systems.
- Expand access to air conditioning units for people with chronic conditions by broadening eligibility criteria and expanding coverage for the purchase, delivery and installation.
- Direct Medicaid managed care plans to increase the availability and adoption of integrated care options and limit non-integrated offerings, to promote integration of care.
- Revamp and improve customer experience on New York's health plan marketplace, by conducting a comprehensive review of the application experience.
- Increase the affordability of prescription drugs through exploring participation in the FDA's Section 840 Importation Program where states can seek approval to import lower cost Canadian drugs,
- Introduce legislation to hold pharmacy benefit managers and drug manufacturers accountable for any hidden and unnecessary costs.

Workforce

In general, workforce development was a highlight of the Governor in the State of the State. While her proposals are not explicitly aimed at home care solutions, they provide a basis for HCANYS to work from depending on the details emerging in the Governor's actual budget submission expected January 21. "Home care" workforce was directly mentioned once in the Governor's speech and Policy Book in connection to wages for home care workers. While details are scant at this time, the Governor did suggest a few areas of potential opportunity for healthcare workforce pipeline development that could be emerging opportunities.

- Propose that the State will make SUNY and CUNY community college free for students ages 25-55 pursuing select associates degrees in high demand occupations, including the field of nursing. The State would cover the costs of tuition, books, and fees for participants in this program and would increase funding for career support infrastructure to connect students with job opportunities.
- Propose that the Department of Labor (DOL) would launch a new initiative to support employer-led training. Participating businesses

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would be reimbursed 50 percent of the trainee wages during the program, with the requirement that these employees remain on the job for at least one year after completing the training.

- Reiterate the workforce initiatives currently leveraged by the State's federal Medicaid 1115 waiver, the Career Pathways Training (CPT) program and the Student Loan Repayment Program. The CPT program, which is administered through NY's three regional Workforce Investment Organizations, covers tuition, textbooks, and educational and career supports and place individuals in high-demand titles including LPN, Associates and Bachelor's prepared RNs, Master Social Workers, Respiratory Therapists. The Student Loan Repayment Program (SLRP) launch is forthcoming and will provide loan payments for psychiatrists, primary care physicians, dentists, nurse practitioners, and pediatric clinical nurse specialists. Participants make a three-year (CPT) or four-year (SLRP) service commitment to work at providers that serve at least 30 percent Medicaid or uninsured members.
- Propose to expand support for healthcare training programs under the Increasing Training Capacity in Statewide Healthcare Facilities grant program, with a distinct focus on nursing training programs. The initial Increasing Training Capacity in Statewide Healthcare Facilities grant was launched in 2023 with a contract period that extends through September 2025 and was only made available to Hospitals and Nursing Homes.
- Propose continued support for the recently launched Healthcare Training and Life-skills Program which provides grants for regional programs that prepare and support healthcare students through the program, covering costs like childcare, transportation, and tutoring. Applications for the initial RFA for the "Healthcare Education and Life-skills Program" are due to the State on January 15th and is open to home care provider applicants.
- Propose funding support for Area Health Education Centers, which are local training programs that recruit younger individuals from underrepresented populations into healthcare professions. In addition, New York would launch Health Workforce Connects, a portal that will engage individuals in new and growing careers in healthcare.
- Propose the launch of the Monroe (County) Ladder Demonstration Program to test a model aimed at mitigating the "benefits cliff" which can lead lower-wage workers to sometimes decline promotions or opportunities to transition from part-time to full-time work because of concerns that increases in income will be offset by reductions in public benefits. The program would help to address any real or perceived loss of means-tested public benefits through the provision of work incentive payments and provide funding for evaluation of impact on participating workers, their families as well as employers.

Scope of Practice

- Expand the scope of practice for Certified Nursing Assistants to administer routine medications in nursing homes, allow physician assistants to practice more independently, and allow pharmacists to order smoking cessation medications and counsel patients.
- Introduce legislation to move the process for issuing physician licenses and providing physician and physician assistants oversight to DOH.

Health Related Social Needs

- Enhance health equity through social care networks to provide Medicaid members with screening and navigation to essential services like housing support, food assistance, transportation, and other resources, addressing social needs to improve health outcomes and health equity.
- Address health disparities in Medicaid by requiring managed care plans to analyze health outcomes through a health equity lens, develop stratified quality measures by demographics, and implement value-based payment strategies to reduce disparities and improve health equity in New York's Medicaid managed care population.
- Advance health equity through data infrastructure by investing $125 million in the Health Equity Regional Organization (HERO) to develop statewide data, infrastructure, improve program evaluation, and reduce health disparities through targeted policies and interventions.

Individuals with Disabilities

- Provide funding for regional disability clinics specializing in primary and specialty care.
- A $75M investment to identify genetic causes of developmental disabilities, enhancing diagnosis, treatment and understanding of related health issues.
- Expand the NY tax credit for businesses that hire people with disabilities and simplifying the application process.
- Increase wheelchair access to Medicaid members by increasing rates for clinical specialty evaluation for new wheelchairs.
- Create an American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter fellowship pilot, partnering experienced ASL interpreter mentors with new ASL interpreter fellows to develop professional skills and establishing roots into communities.
- Expand the scope of the spinal cord injury research board, funding additional research.

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Veterans

- Support veterans with critical mental health investments and proposing legislation to expand support for Gold Star Families.
- Expand on suicide prevention initiatives including enhanced risk assessment training, outreach tools, gun safety programs, and improved access to tele-mental health services.

Supportive Housing

- Increase funding for the Supportive Housing and Assistance Program to maintain and improve supportive housing, that provides a safe place for many of the most housing insecure and vulnerable New Yorkers.
- Take steps to stabilize the Empire State Supportive Housing Initiative, and the New York Supportive Housing Program, to ensure that the supportive housing stock and services remain visible and accessible.

Elder Exploitation

- Protect seniors from financial exploitation by proposing legislation to empower financial institutions to pause suspicious transactions, mandate reporting of elder fraud, and provide training to identify and precent financial exploration while safeguarding seniors' autonomy.

Maternal, Child, and Infant Health

- Provide $100M in capital grants for childcare providers to renovate and build new child care centers. $10M will be available for to family childcare providers to renovate and repair their home-based childcare locations
- Build a NY Coalition for childcare, to identify a sustainable source of revenue and funding for universal childcare
- Offer free maternal health and newborn supply boxes for expectant mothers enrolled in Medicaid, through community-based organizations and hospitals serving lower-income areas.
- Locate mental health services into OBGYN practices in high-needs communities.
- Create a Birth allowance - $100 per month benefit during pregnancy and $1,200 benefit at birth for New Yorkers who receive public assistance.
- Expand access to infertility treatments
- Establish a parent resources center webpage to provide information on child development, school readiness, and partner with OBGYN and pediatric offices to provide families with information about resources.
- Cover the cost for all school meals (breakfast and lunch) for over 2.7 million students.

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- Increase access to Specials Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children to reach 475,000 people.

Mental and Behavioral Health

- Update the involuntary commitment law, to address gaps in the standards for involuntary commitment. This will expand authority to Psychiatric Nurse Practitioners to help address bottlenecks in hospitals.
- Strengthen Kendra's Law, which governs Assisted Outpatient Treatment for individuals with serious mental illness by reducing barriers to care. This allows individuals to access Assisted Outpatient Treatment services without a court order.
- Support youth mental health through afterschool programs, training in teen mental health first aid, improving diagnoses for children with complex clinical needs, and expanding the network of clubhouse mental health programs and youth safe spaces.
- Establish standards that require insurers to provide the necessary mental health care coverage.
- Expand the Intensive Support Engagement Team (INSET) to provide voluntary, peer-led support to individuals on their recovery journey.
- Create a hospital-based peer bridge program to help individuals with severe mental illness navigate the health care system, prevent rehospitalization, make informed decisions about their care, treatment, housing, transitions, and support.
- Add street medicine and street psychiatry providers to Safe Options Support teams, to deliver timely care to individuals experiencing homelessness without requiring individuals to leave their belongings or seek care in a hospital.
- Support community-determined wellness in historically marginalized neighborhoods through an innovative grant program to support culturally responsive wellness programming.

Emergency Preparedness

- Support business recovery after disasters adverse weather events by modernizing the Jobs Retention Tax Credit Program by lowering the eligibility threshold to businesses with 10+ employees, removing industry-specific limitations, and providing tax credits for employee wages, helping more businesses recover, retain workers, and rebuild after emergencies.
- Expand media literacy to combat misinformation through the New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services (DHSES) to enhance media literacy efforts by developing a teacher's guide with age-specific examples, resources for parents and the public, and a public campaign to equip New Yorkers with critical skills to evaluate information and counter misinformation in the event of an emergency.

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HCANYS Staff Conclusions

In summary, the Governor's State of the State Address and Policy Book prioritizes new proposals and funding on general affordability of goods and services and public health and safety protection measures. With regard to sectors of the HCANYS home and community-based services membership, the address contained limited reference to home care, hospice, managed care/PACE, or waiver service programs and no reference to CDPAP/FI.

The focus of the funds as proposed by the Governor toward other, especially non-health areas of the budget, signals a need for strong presence and advocacy with the Governor and Legislature to include the home and community-based sector among the 2025 priority funding and support needs in the state.

As it regards CDPAP and the ongoing transition to a Statewide Fiscal Intermediary, the release of the budget bills next week will tell if the Governor offers changes to the reforms, the timeline, or any aspect of the program in response to the concerns of CDPAP consumers or of the FI, provider or health plan CDPAP stakeholders.

HCANYS' Policy Team is meeting regularly with our legislative affairs firm and will meet with key lawmakers and legislative staff to discuss how the proposals will impact HCANYS members, with much more information and insights to follow upon release of the Governor's budget next week.

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