

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo's 2016-2017 Executive Budget Supports Older New Yorkers and their Families

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo's 2016-2017 Executive Budget continues its commitment to older New Yorkers and their families. Core aging programs and services administered by the State Office for the Aging continue to grow, increasing access to services statewide.

To view Governor Cuomo's 2016 State of the State policy book, visit

https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/2016_State_of_the_State_Book.pdf

The Executive Budget:

- Includes a \$2.5 million increase from the 2015-2016 final budget for the Community Services for the Elderly Program (CSE), which provides flexible funds to counties to meet locally determined needs.
- Includes an additional \$500,000 increase from the 2015-2016 final budget to support the modernization of the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP).
- Preserves funding for key programs, including the Expanded In-home Services for the Elderly Program (EISEP), which provides non-medical in-home services, case management, respite, and ancillary services to frail older adults. The Wellness in Nutrition Program (WIN) funds home delivered and congregate meals and provides nutrition counseling and education to frail older adults who may be unable to prepare meals for themselves. Further, EISEP, CSE, and WIN receive automatic annual increases due to the human services cost of living adjustment (COLA) enacted several years ago.
- Supports the sustainability plan for the enhanced and expanded New York Connects program under the state's Balanced Incentive Payment (BIP) program. NY Connects is a statewide, locally based no wrong door system that provides one stop access to free, objective and comprehensive information and assistance on accessing long term services and supports.

Additionally, there are many other proposed initiatives that will have a positive impact on older adults and their families.

HEALTHY AGING

Chronic conditions are the major cause of illness, disability, and death in the United States. By the year 2040, the cost of chronic conditions is estimated to reach a staggering \$864 billion annually. Chronic conditions among older adults often are preventable and in many cases manageable through evidence-based programs. Healthy aging includes exercise, prevention, and wellness. Communities designed as age friendly offer social connections and provide meaningful volunteer opportunities.

Proposal: Invest \$100 Million in Downtown Revitalization Program (p. 58)

To revitalize 10 struggling downtown communities, the Governor proposes the \$100 million Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI), a comprehensive approach to transform long-forgotten areas into vibrant neighborhoods where tomorrow's workforce will want to live, work, and raise a family. The DRI will invest in housing, economic development, transportation, and community projects.

Proposal: Invest \$125 Million to Rebuild State Parks (p. 138)

In 2015, the Governor launched NY Parks 2020, a multi-year commitment to leverage \$900 million in funding for state parks improvements. This year, the Governor proposes \$90 million to further this initiative, adding to an \$80 million investment of storm recovery resources in our state parks.

Proposal: Continuing Innovation in Health Information Technology (p. 241)

The availability of timely, accurate, and comprehensive health information is foundational to improving New Yorkers' health, transforming the health delivery system, and improving health care efficiency. Including an investment of \$40 million in 2016, the state will have invested \$116 million to develop a health information technology infrastructure capable of sharing information to support and inform consumers, providers, payers, and other health care stakeholders.

The first part of this investment developed the Statewide Health Information Network of New York (SHIN-NY), which is an interconnected, statewide health information exchange that enables physicians and other health care providers to share health information over a secure network.

The second part of this investment will create an All Payer Database (APD), a comprehensive information repository that will collect and integrate health care data from all public and private payers and providers.

Proposal: New York State Certified High Quality Foods (p. 246)

In 2015, the Governor created an Advisory Committee on Safe and Healthy Foods to convene the nation's top experts in food production and food advocacy to examine food safety and misbranding issues and to identify ways for consumers which of New York's food is the best available.

The Governor will build on this to launch the New York State Certified High Quality Initiative—a comprehensive plan to restore consumer confidence in New York products, ensure that products are accurately labeled, and identify New York producers that adhere to best practices in food handling and environmental stewardship.

The New York State Certified High Quality initiative comprises five elements: branding and marketing, enforcement, monitoring, training and industry support, and investment.

Proposal: Launch Statewide Effort to Increase Awareness and Screening for Breast and Prostate Cancer (p. 249)

The Governor is committed to increasing the state's breast cancer screening rate by 10 percent over the next five years. As a result of the Governor's initiative, more than 212,000 additional women will be screened for breast cancer by December 2020.

Additionally, 25,000 men will receive peer education and outreach services that will encourage them to discuss their risk for prostate cancer with their health care providers in order to make an informed decision about whether to be screened.

The Governor will launch a \$91 million comprehensive, statewide plan to increase rates of breast cancer screening, help women access the treatment they need, and educate thousands of men about the risk associated with cancer.

Proposal: Launch a \$15 Million Public-Private Outreach and Public Education Campaign for Cancer (p. 251)

To encourage more women to get screened for breast cancer and men to be informed of prostate cancer risks, the state will implement a two-pronged public awareness campaign that focuses on underserved communities:

To encourage more women to get mammograms, and men to discuss their risks for prostate cancer with their health care providers, the state will fund 10 community-based peer education programs throughout the state.

The state will also partner with the Healthcare Education Project to raise breast cancer awareness through a media campaign that will target low income, underserved populations and encourage them to get screened. In conjunction with this campaign, the Department of Health will establish a website containing a breast cancer hotline and additional means of connecting women with the component programs in the Governor's breast cancer initiative. The state will complement these efforts with a \$5 million education and public awareness media campaign across the state over the next five years.

Proposal: Increase Access to Breast Cancer Screening (p. 252)

To increase women's access to mammography services, the Department of Health will require hospital-based screening facilities that already offer mammograms to offer service hours at least once a week during the early morning, evening or weekend. This action will assist women who have difficulty scheduling their mammograms during the typical 9am-5pm work day.

To provide access to mammography services to homebound patients or those who otherwise lack access, the state will invest \$59.5 million to help community providers purchase and operate mobile mammography vehicles.

New York State will invest \$11.6 million to hire additional health care workers at cancer treatment

and other health care facilities to identify and conduct outreach to patients due for breast cancer screening, address barriers to facilitate screening completion such as transportation, and assist with securing any subsequent needed diagnostic follow-up and treatment services.

Proposal: Extend the Upper Age of the Current HIV Testing Guidelines Beyond 64 (p. 257)

New York State law requires hospitals and primary care providers to offer an HIV test to persons ages 13 to 64. There is no science supporting the current age limit of 64. In fact, half of all people living with diagnosed HIV infection in the state are age 50 and older, and approximately 200 cases of HIV are diagnosed each year in persons age 60 and older. To address this problem, the Governor will introduce new legislation to extend the upper age for the offer of an HIV test beyond the age of 64.

RETIREMENT SECURITY

Historically, financial security in retirement has depended on three factors: Social Security, a pension from a company plan, and savings and investments. Retirement security also means having enough resources to pay for housing, medical bills, food, utilities, taxes, and leisure.

Proposal: Make 500,000 Homes and 20,000 Businesses More Energy Efficient By 2020 (p. 79)

The state will increase the energy efficiency of 500,000 homes and 20,000 businesses by 2020, reducing their carbon emissions and utility bills by \$1.5 billion. The state will invest part of the Clean Energy Fund to help property owners and renters audit their current energy use and identify energy savings opportunities, and replace inefficient systems and appliances with high- efficiency models wherever possible.

Proposal: Invest \$75 Million in Affordable Housing and Retrofit 100,000 Units by 2025 (p. 83)

As a part of the state's goal to make 500,000 homes more energy efficient by 2020, the state will work with the Department of Homes and Community Renewal and other public and affordable housing agencies to bring even higher efficiency retrofits to 100,000 multifamily housing units by 2025, cutting costs to customers, making their homes more comfortable, and reducing emissions from our building stock. The state will also take steps to ensure that all new affordable housing construction is energy efficient.

Proposal: Create the \$25 Million Empire State Poverty Reduction Initiative (p. 163)

The Governor is launching the Empire State Poverty Reduction Initiative (ESPRI), a new initiative that will provide \$5 million in operating aid and a pool of \$20 million in capital funding to assist 10 high-poverty communities around the state to create and implement comprehensive plans to reduce poverty.

Proposal: Launch Empire Corps: A New Youth Corps to Help New Yorkers in Need (p. 167)

Last year, the Governor built on the legacy of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Civilian Conservation Corps and launched the New York State's Excelsior Conservation Corps, a new environmental education and stewardship program for 18- to 25-year olds. This year, Governor Cuomo proposes to expand this model further by launching Empire Corps, a new effort that will enable up to 150 AmeriCorps members to join front line efforts to address poverty, hunger, and homelessness across New York.

Proposal: Implement Recommendations of the Anti-Hunger Task Force (p. 169)

The Anti-Hunger Task Force has worked tirelessly since 2013 to research issues related to hunger in New York and has developed a series of smart recommendations for the state to pursue, many of which have been already been adopted.

Proposal: Commit \$22.5 Million to Improve Access to Emergency Food (p. 171)

The state's emergency food system helps 2,500 emergency food providers serve more than 225 million meals to New Yorkers that access emergency food programs each year. To build on the state's 2015 \$4.5 million investment in this system, the Governor proposes an additional \$22.5 million to extend his \$4.5 million annual investment through 2020.

Proposal: Establish New York State Council on Hunger and Food Policy (p. 172)

To establish a permanent focus on anti-hunger issues in the state, Governor Cuomo will establish the New York State Council on Hunger and Food Policy. The Council will be composed of 26 members appointed by the Governor and chaired by the Commissioner of the Department of Agriculture and Markets.

Proposal: Extend SNAP Benefits to 750,000 Households (p. 173)

Governor Cuomo will adopt the recommendation of the Anti-Hunger Task Force and will raise the Gross Income Test level from less than 130 percent of the federal poverty level to 150 percent of poverty for all households with earned income. This change will deliver an estimated \$688.5 million in additional federal SNAP benefits to New Yorkers, with an estimated economic impact of \$1.27 billion, without any attendant increase in state or county costs.

Proposal: Leverage Federal Nutrition Programs & Eliminate Barriers to Benefits (p. 174)

As recommended by the Anti-Hunger Task Force, Governor Cuomo will continue to support \$250,000 in grants to help child and adult care programs maximize federal funds that subsidize free food for children and adults.

To better ensure that people in need of help from SNAP are able to access that essential anti-

hunger program, the Governor will also drive program enrollment by building on the state's Nutrition Outreach and Education Program, and increase its reach through coordinated efforts with the State Offices for the Aging and the Office for New Americans, agencies that work most closely with groups that have particularly low rates of participation in federal nutrition programs.

Proposal: Redesign Electronic Benefits Card (p. 175)

Under Governor Cuomo's leadership, New York has taken important steps toward reducing SNAP stigma, including the 2012 elimination of the finger imaging requirement for SNAP applicants and recipients. To further reduce stigma, the Governor will adopt a recommendation from the Task Force and will direct the Office of Temporary Disability Assistance to issue a redesigned Electronic Benefits Card in 2016 that looks like a credit card and maintains appropriate security safeguards.

Proposal: Increase the Minimum Wage to \$15 per Hour for All New Yorkers (p. 200)

In order to raise earnings, reduce income disparities, and increase consumer spending to spur job growth, Governor Cuomo will push this year to make New York the first state in the nation to enact a \$15 hourly minimum wage for all workers. To give businesses time to plan, the increase will be phased in incrementally, reaching \$15 on December 31, 2018 in New York City and on July 1, 2021 for the rest of the state.

Proposal: \$20 Billion Housing and Homelessness Plan (p. 204)

Since taking office, Governor Cuomo has committed to preserve or build 14,300 units of affordable housing through the landmark \$1 billion House NY initiative and also created the Tenant Protection Unit, which has returned more than 50,000 housing units to rent regulation, preserving the affordability of those homes for years to come. Yet even with these investments, New York has not been immune to rising housing costs across the state and must take steps to deliver more affordable housing to those who need it.

Proposal: \$10 Billion Affordable Housing Program (p. 204)

To add critical supply to the state's stock of affordable housing, the Governor proposes House NY 2020, a new, \$10 billion, five-year affordable housing plan that will create and preserve 100,000 units across the state.

Proposal: Ensure Financial Security for Retirees (p. 212)

Approximately 3.5 million private sector workers aged 18 to 64 in New York lack access to an employer-sponsored retirement savings program. Many of these workers face delayed retirements and reduced standards of living, and will be forced to rely on the state's taxpayer-funded social safety net. To address this growing problem and provide input into future legislation, Governor Cuomo will create the NY SMART Commission ("Saving More to Achieve Richer Tomorrows"). The Commission will partner with state agencies, financial services professionals, consumer advocates, and academics to study available options for the creation of a state-administered retirement savings program for workers whose employers do not offer a retirement plan.

**Proposal: Transform New York State’s One-Stop Career Centers
(p. 224)**

The New York State Department of Labor operates 96 One-Stop Career Centers across the state that offer job placement services, career counseling, resume development, and vocational training to jobseekers. Although Career Centers are state-funded, they are often co-located with local workforce and social services agencies, often poorly branded and sometimes difficult to find.

Building upon the success in transforming the DMV experience, Governor Cuomo will rebrand and modernize the state’s 96 career centers. The effort will begin with a select group of “pilot” facilities that will serve as models for a subsequent statewide roll-out. They will leverage and complement online resources as well as those provided by other governmental entities and private providers.

**Proposal: Allow Late Filing of Enhanced STAR Renewal Applications and Senior Exemptions
for Cases of Hardship. (p. 341)**

The Budget allows late filing of Enhanced STAR renewal applications for cases of hardship as late as the last day of the interest-free period for payment of school taxes. Additionally, the local option under the senior exemption in RPTL 467 is expanded to allow a late filing of renewal applications for hardship up to the last day of the interest-free period for payment of school taxes.

Proposal: Make Participation in Income Verification Program (IVP) Mandatory. (p. 342)

Under current law, participation in IVP is optional and seniors who are not enrolled have to reapply for their Enhanced STAR benefits annually. The Budget makes participation in the Income Verification Program (IVP) for Enhanced STAR recipients mandatory, thereby eliminating the annual need to reapply. IVP allows seniors who are reapplying for Enhanced STAR to authorize the assessor to have their incomes verified in subsequent years by the Department of Taxation and Finance. This change will make it easier for qualified senior citizens to keep their Enhanced STAR exemptions.

Proposal: Make Direct STAR Payments to Property Owners in Appropriate Cases. (p. 342)

The Budget would allow the Commissioner of Taxation and Finance to directly reimburse a STAR-eligible property owner who didn’t receive the STAR tax savings to which he or she was entitled due to an administrative error, and where no other remedy is readily available.

Proposal: State Retiree Health Insurance Reform (p. 471)

The Executive Budget includes the following proposals to help restrain the growth in state retiree health care costs:

- Eliminate Reimbursement for the Medicare Part B Income Related Monthly Adjustment Amounts (IRMAA) for High Income State Retirees.

The Federal government imposed this supplemental IRMAA premium in 2007 to require high income retirees to pay more of the increasing Medicare costs. New York, and only one other state (Hawaii), provide reimbursement of the premium to all high income retirees and their dependents. The Budget eliminates this reimbursement effective January 1, 2016.

- Maintain Reimbursement of the Medicare Part B Standard Premium for New State Retirees at \$104.90 per month.

New York is one of only three states (along with Hawaii and California) that provides full reimbursement of the standard premium to all eligible retirees and their dependents. Under this proposal, New York would continue to reimburse the standard premium for new and existing retirees, but would not provide reimbursement for an unfunded Federal Cost of Living Adjustment imposed on new retirees, IRMAA payers or non-Social Security payers. This change would take effect October 1, 2016.

LONG-TERM SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

Long-term services and supports (LTSS) help older adults and individuals with disabilities accomplish everyday tasks such as bathing, dressing, fixing meals, and managing a home. As the population ages, the number of individuals who require long-term services and supports in order to remain independent is projected to double. (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation Report, 2003.)

Proposal: Enact Paid Family Leave for New York Workers (p. 422)

To help workers care for their families while protecting their earnings and job security, the Governor proposes a new paid family leave program for New York workers. New York State's Paid Family Leave Program will provide 12 weeks of job-protected, employee-funded leave to be used for bonding with a new child or caring for a sick relative.

Proposal: Transforming the Health Care Delivery System (p. 240)

In April 2014, the federal government approved a waiver that allowed New York State to reinvest \$8 billion in savings generated by the Medicaid Redesign Team (MRT) to transform New York's health care system and enhance services for New York's Medicaid members. The transformation plan that is being financed through these federal funds is being implemented through the Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment (DSRIP) program.

In 2016, DSRIP will move to the next phase of transforming the health care delivery system in New York by implementing pilot programs to replace expensive fee-for-service payments with "value-based" payments that reward providers for successful patient outcomes and help to achieve one of the core DSRIP goals of reducing avoidable hospital admissions by 25 percent over five years.

Proposal: Strengthen the Home Health Care Workforce (p. 271)

The Governor is proposing legislation to authorize Advanced Home Health Aides (AHHAs) to perform specified advanced tasks under the supervision of a licensed registered professional nurse employed by a home care services agency, hospice program or enhanced assisted living residence.

CAREGIVING

Proposal: Supporting Individuals with Alzheimer’s Disease and Family Caregivers (p. 244)

The 2015-2016 Budget included \$25 million in funding toward care and support services for individuals living with Alzheimer’s disease and other Dementias (AD/D) and their caregivers.

While caregivers may be able to manage the everyday tasks required to maintain older persons with chronic illnesses or disabilities in their homes, figuring out how to address an illness or injury after a hospitalization can be confusing and distressing. Hospital staff often do not provide instruction or information on what to expect and what tasks will need to be performed.

In 2015, Governor Cuomo signed the Caregiver Advise, Record, and Enable Act, which requires that hospitals allow patients to formally designate a caregiver before they leave the hospital or are transferred to another facility. It also requires hospital workers to provide the caregiver with instruction or training on how to perform tasks for the patient at home, such as changing bandages or administering medication.

OTHER INITIATIVES

Proposal: Early Voting in 139 Locations (p. 283)

Thirty-seven states and the District of Columbia allow voters to cast ballots in person before Election Day. To increase voter participation, Governor Cuomo proposes legislation that will allow New Yorkers to vote early in all elections. This legislation will require every county to offer residents access to one early voting polling place that will allow residents to vote for 12 days leading up to Election Day. Early voting will increase participation and make our elections more inclusive and democratic.

Proposal: Automatic Voter Registration (p. 285)

The Governor will make New York the third state in the nation—and the first on the East Coast—to adopt automatic voter registration at the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). Under the new system, unless a DMV user checks an “opt out” box, the information used in any DMV application will be automatically sent to county boards of elections to register the applicant or update

registration information. This change will help maintain accurate voter rolls and facilitate New Yorkers' participation in elections.

Proposal: Authorize an Additional \$8 Million for the Low-Income Housing Credit in Each of the Next Five Fiscal Years. (p. 337)

To help expand affordable housing in New York, this program provides credits to develop qualifying low income housing projects. The Executive Budget authorizes the Division of Housing and Community Renewal to allocate an additional \$8 million for the program in each of the next five fiscal years, beginning April 1, 2016. Credits are awarded in equal installments for a 10-year period. The total amount of credits to be awarded will be \$400 million over a multi-year period.

Proposal: Extend the Credit for Companies that Provide Transportation to Individuals with Disabilities for Six Years. (p. 339)

The credit for companies that provide transportation to individuals with disabilities is extended for an additional six years. The current credit, scheduled to expire on December 31, 2016, offsets up to \$10,000 in costs associated with upgrading vehicles, or purchasing qualifying new vehicles, to accommodate the transportation of disabled individuals.