

Medicaid

Medicaid Matters New York

Matters

2016-2017 Executive Budget Medicaid Consumer Advocacy Response: **Access to Coverage and Consumer Assistance**

New York has a strong history of providing access to public insurance programs, as well as robust consumer assistance services to help people get, keep and use their coverage. Medicaid Matters New York (MMNY), the statewide coalition representing the interests of Medicaid beneficiaries, recommends the following actions:

[Oppose elimination of spousal/parental refusal](#)

The Governor's budget seeks once again to eliminate the longstanding right of "refusal" that is currently possessed by parents of children with significant needs and low-income spouses of adults who need Medicaid for home care and other services. This right of refusal is essential to helping these vulnerable families avoid impoverishment to access services for their loved ones.

MMNY recommendation: Reject the Governor's proposal to eliminate spousal/parental refusal.

[Oppose reduction of the spousal impoverishment resource allowance](#)

The Governor has proposed to reduce the amount of assets that can be retained by someone whose spouse is receiving long term care or waiver services in Medicaid. The proposal would reduce the amount from \$74,820 to the federal minimum, \$23,844. This proposal would result in impoverishment of people who are low- and moderate income, and would not affect those with higher resources. This proposal would not result in tremendous savings, but would cause great hardship.

MMNY recommendation: Preserve or increase the Medicaid spousal impoverishment resource allowance.

[Expand the Essential Plan to cover income-eligible immigrants](#)

Formerly referred to as the Basic Health Program, the Essential Plan provides affordable, quality insurance coverage for people just above Medicaid income eligibility. However, the Essential Plan leaves uninsured a small subset of New Yorkers permanently residing under color of law (PRUCOL), including those with Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) status, with incomes between 138% and 200% of the federal poverty level.

MMNY recommendation: Allocate \$10.3 million to extend Essential Plan coverage to all income-eligible New Yorkers with DACA and PRUCOL immigration status.

[Fund consumer assistance](#)

The Governor proposes \$2.5 million for the Community Health Advocates (CHA) program, which provides consumer assistance to tens of thousands of individuals each year – including Medicaid beneficiaries – to help them understand, use, and keep their health coverage. The CHA program needs a total of \$4 million to maintain its current level of services.

While there has been much success in reducing the number of uninsured New Yorkers, there remains a need for community outreach to people who are historically harder to reach. The State should fund community-based outreach so more people are able to learn about and find the health coverage to which they are entitled.

MMNY recommendations:

- 1) Add \$1.5 million to fully fund the Community Health Advocates program at \$4 million.
- 2) Add \$2 million in new funding for community-based outreach to people who remain uninsured.