



NYS COUNCIL SUPPORTS PROPOSAL TO EXTEND MEDICAID 30 DAYS BEFORE PRISON/JAIL RELEASE

The New York State Council strongly supports a proposal included in this year's Assembly budget bill which would extend Medicaid coverage to individuals 30 days prior to release. This proposal would support successful re-entry strategies for people with 'high needs' associated serious mental health and addiction related conditions and would directly support New York State's ongoing effort to provide high-quality, comprehensive care to New Yorkers who need it the most.

According to current state and federal law, incarcerated individuals who are Medicaid-eligible cannot receive Medicaid-covered services prior to release. As a result, individuals are not able to get the medications and services that best enable them to transition to the community and avoid relapse and recidivism. This proposal would ensure continuity of care that can have such a critical impact on health status and decrease the need for more acute and costly services in the short and longer term.

We join with several other groups in our strong support of a change in the Social Services Law and a waiver or other authorization from the Federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services that would allow Medicaid coverage of such services, and reduce unnecessary health care, criminal justice and related costs for such individuals, as well as the likelihood that they will commit additional crimes.

This change would achieve the essential goal of extending Medicaid coverage to "high needs" individuals 30 days immediately prior to release for incarceration for services required as part of successful transition plan to the community, while also accruing state and local savings from avoided relapse and hospitalization of justice-involved individuals, and from federal Medicaid matching funds for care provided prior to release.

Furthermore, the vast majority of those who are incarcerated would be eligible for the increased federal Medicaid match, which will eventually rise to 90% as a result of the Affordable Care Act. As a result, the upfront cost to the State would be very small, thereby increasing the size of the savings to the State

We are committed to working together for the passage of this legislation. If you have questions, please feel free to contact me at (518) 461-8200 or nyscouncil@albany.twcbc.com.

Lauri Cole
Executive Director