

Statement on the Lack of a Universal Prescriber Prevails Provision in the Final New York State Budget

We applaud our policymakers for working diligently to get the budget passed on time, but we had hoped that the result would be in the best interest of all New Yorkers. In particular, we are concerned that although they have included Medicaid patient protection language in the budget for atypical antipsychotic medications they have overlooked all other drug classes and therefore the patient populations who take them.

The final budget contains a provision that gives health care providers the final say on prescribing atypical antipsychotics to Medicaid beneficiaries. This is a step in the right direction when combined with the Governor's earlier decision to reverse limitations on patient choice regarding contraception and we thank policymakers for taking that important step. However, much more needs to be accomplished to address the access to care issues being experienced by Medicaid recipients with regard to all other drug classes.

The Governor and the Legislature have acknowledged that problems currently exist with Medicaid prescription drug access. Limiting access to vital life-saving medications will disrupt continuity of care, especially in vulnerable populations and actually lead to more medical complications therefore increasing costs because of unnecessary hospitalizations and emergency room visits. Health providers know best what treatments to use to balance therapeutic & safety concerns, not health benefits managers. The Medicaid system should facilitate this process not establish more obstacles for providers and patients to overcome.

Individuals with complex care needs such as those with HIV / AIDS, autoimmune diseases, major depression, cancer, and organ transplants, require unique strategies to manage their care. Many of these individuals have multiple co-morbid conditions that require unfettered access to the full arsenal of treatments. Patients and their providers need open access to all medications in order to maintain consistent disease management in an effort for them to live healthier, more productive lives.

The final budget addresses the needs of some Medicaid beneficiaries, but not all. We believe that all New Yorkers deserve the best possible medical care and have access to lifesaving and life-improving medicines, including those with Medicaid pharmacy benefits. We are resolved to continue forward in our pursuit for a universal solution that does not distinguish between disease states. We ask that the Governor and Legislature work with us on an inclusive policy that meets the needs of all with Medicaid pharmacy benefits.

Lupus Foundation of Mid and Northern New York, Inc.
New York State Rheumatology Society
Mental Health Association in New York State
U.S. Pain Foundation
Northeast Kidney Foundation
Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services
1 in 9: The Long Island Breast Cancer Action Coalition
Latino Commission on AIDS
New York Multiple Sclerosis Coalition Action Network
National Multiple Sclerosis Society, New York City - Southern New York Chapter
National Multiple Sclerosis Society, Long Island Chapter
National Multiple Sclerosis Society, Upstate New York Chapter
Hispanic Federation
American Lung Association in New York
Capital District African American Coalition on AIDS
The Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies
Centro Cívico of Amsterdam, Inc.
NYC Hemophilia
Hudson Valley Community Services, Inc.
Chinese-American Planning Council
Lupus Foundation of Genesee Valley NY, Inc.
The S.L.E. Lupus Foundation
Lupus Alliance of America, Long Island/Queens Affiliate
Lupus Alliance of America, NY Southern Tier Affiliate
Lupus Alliance of America, Upstate NY Affiliate
Sjögren's Syndrome Foundation
American Autoimmune Related Diseases Association
International Institute of Human Empowerment, Inc.
Scleroderma Foundation/Tri-State Inc. Chapter
National Kidney Foundation of CNY
Association of Hispanic Mental Health Professionals
National Psoriasis Foundation
National Alliance on Mental Illness-New York City Metro
Medicaid Matters NY
National Alliance on Mental Illness-New York State
New York State Nurses Association

Gay Men's Health Crisis