

New York StateWide Senior Action Council

MEMBER UPDATE

Winter 2018



María Alvarez

StateWide Needs Your Support

As a grassroots organization, StateWide relies on our membership, our network of collaborators, donors, and

funders to act on the mandate set forth by our membership. For this reason, **I am asking that you consider making a tax deductible donation to our Rose Kryzak Legacy Fund.**

In the spirit of Rose Kryzak, one of our tireless advocates, this fund covers our advocacy and lobbying efforts. Without this fund we would not be able to undertake many of the activities in which we have been so successful.

Your Support is Needed Now More than Ever. With your donations we will be able to work on issues such as:

- Strengthening and Protecting Social Security & Medicare
- Protecting the Affordable Care Act & Medicaid
- Addressing the shortage of home care workers around the state
- Preventing avoidable re-admissions to the hospital through the Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment (DSRIP) Program

- Observation Status – to do away with the 2 and 3 midnight rules which cost seniors thousands of dollars and other important issues.

The 65 years & over population is quickly becoming 20% of the overall population. As such, we need to make sure that any decisions made in local, state, and national levels reflect this reality.

I want to wish everyone a happy holiday, and an active and successful new year!

I look forward to continuing our work together in 2019!

Join or Renew Your StateWide Membership Today! See page 11 for more information.

Inside this issue:

Executive Director Letter	1
Legislative Update, SW on the Move	2-3
Senior Medicare Patrol	4
Durable Medical Equipment	5
Home Care Crisis	6
New Officers, Convention 2018	7-9
New Members and Application	10-11
Announcements	12

Medicare Patient's Rights Helpline 1-800-333-4374

Do you know who represents you in government?



More importantly, do your representatives know you and know what you care about? All politics is local, and so - you, the constituent - are the key to opening a dialog about needed funding for senior services. StateWide leaders and staff meet with legislators on the local, state and federal levels to highlight the public policy priorities that our membership sets at Convention. Almost always at these meetings we are asked about what constituents are part of StateWide. So you see, YOU are the key to improved funding for senior services.

With so many changes in the State Legislature and the House of Representatives, this is a very special year to renew your relationship with an elected legislator, or maybe meet them for the first time. If you live in a district with a newly elected legislator, keep in mind that their term starts January 1, 2019 and it is so important to introduce yourself and offer StateWide to them as a resource on senior issues. Establish that connection so that you have a relationship, and then when you write or visit your legislator to advocate for seniors they will already know you as an important constituent.



WHO REPRESENTS ME?

Call your local Board of Elections to find out. Just give your home address and ask for the names of

all representatives who will serve your district in 2019. It is easy to do so on the internet, just go to the NYS Board of Elections web site (www.elections.ny.gov) and click on the box "Need to look up Your Elected Official or District Map?"



StateWide on the Move!

This year, Members & Staff have participated in events all over the NYS. Here is a sampling:

- Albany, NY - Gail Myers, Deputy Director, testified before the NYS Assembly Committee on Aging. You can view her testimony on our Website under State and Federal Updates.
- Brooklyn, NY - María Alvarez, Executive Director participated in the Brooklyn Borough President, Eric L. Adams, NY Health ACT Campaign Event.
- New York City, - Priscilla Bassett, Member, Sullivan County & NYC Chapters, spoke at NYC Council Press Conference on NY Health Act Public Hearing
- Tompkins County, NY - Tompkins County Chapter President Wilma Lawrence has been working feverishly to get her Town of Caroline designated as an Age Friendly Community. She has already gained the support of the Tompkins County Office for the Aging and of StateWide, of course! Good Luck, Wil!
- Buffalo, NY – Helen Sanders, President of StateWide's Board of Directors, represented StateWide at the Buffalo Age Friendly Symposium.
- Do you have anything that our members should know about? Let us know! Call us at 800-333-4374, email us at info@nysenior.org, or write to us at NY StateWide Senior Action Council, 275 State Street Albany, NY 12210

State Issues Impacting Services for Seniors



The new state Legislative Session will start in early January, with Governor Cuomo's State of the State Message. StateWide will do an analysis of the

Message and let our members know if aging issues are addressed. In the beginning of Feb., state budget negotiations will begin, and once again, StateWide will brief our membership on the Governor's Proposed Budget which the Assembly and the Senate have to vote on to start the fiscal year on April 1.

This time, recent elections have changed the dynamics of who is at the budget negotiating table. The Democrats now hold the Majority in the State Senate, and Senator Andrea Stewart Cousins (Westchester County) has been elected as the Leader. She will not only be one of the three negotiating the budget (no longer three men in a room!), but she will also determine who will be the new chairs of the various Committees. StateWide will meet with the new Chairs of the Senate Aging, Health and Finance Committees early in the new year to share our priorities, including continued funding for our Helplines.

From media reports, we understand that the newly elected majorities will reach early consensus on voting rights and campaign finance reforms. Health, education and taxes will also be important issues. StateWide has been a long time advocate of NY Health, often called Improved Medicare for All, and safe nurse to patient staffing ratios in hospitals and nursing

homes. These bills have passed the Assembly in recent years, but not the Senate. We will renew our efforts to have these issues become law, but your voice will be needed to raise these as constituent issues.

Federal Issues Impacting Seniors



Much has changed at the national level, with many new faces representing districts, including Congressmembers from New York State. The mid-term elections have given the Democrats the Majority in the House of Representatives, with promises to save and improve the Affordable Care Act and ensure that individuals with pre-existing conditions will be able to afford their health insurance coverage. For the past several years we have been reading proposed House Majority legislation that threatens the solvency or future of Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security; expectations are now that the new leadership will work on improvements. The House of Representatives controls the purse strings because budget appropriations must begin in the House, and the new Chair of the Appropriations Committee is expected to be NY Congresswoman Nita Lowey (Westchester/Rockland), who understands the importance of senior programs. Important issues need to be acted upon, including the Farm Bill and its provisions that fund SNAP (the food stamps program), funding for the Administration on Aging programs and efforts to make prescription drugs more affordable.

Medicare & Medicaid Fraud Cost NY Taxpayers Over \$5 Billion Annually*

Estimates based on FBI data indicate that fraud in the Medicare and Medicaid programs cost the national economy over \$80 billion annually, and costs New York taxpayers more than \$5 billion annually. Fraudulent activities range from criminals using stolen Medicare numbers or lying about eligibility to providers billing for services never provided or received or dispensing generic drugs billed at name-brand prices.



Learning how to **PROTECT, DETECT and REPORT**

suspected errors, fraud or abuse will protect you and

others from becoming victims of Medicare Fraud. If you suspect that you have been a target of a scam or abuse, call **800-333-4374** and report it to StateWide, your NYS Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP).

Join the SMP Program, Become a Volunteer Today!

Help Medicare Beneficiaries Protect, Detect and Report

Give Presentations to Medicare Beneficiaries

Staff Exhibits and Tables at Community Events

Perform Administrative Work

Protecting Your Identity



Here are some important steps you can take to protect yourself from **IDENTITY THEFT.**

- Don't share or confirm your Medicare or Social Security number with anyone who contacts you by telephone, email, or in person, unless you've given them permission in advance. Medicare will NEVER contact you (unless you ask them to) to ask for your Medicare number or other personal information or to send you a new card. Medicare already has your information.
- Don't ever let anyone borrow or pay to use your Medicare number.
- There is no charge for your new card, so don't pay anyone to send it to you.
- Review your Medicare Summary Notice (MSN) to be sure you and Medicare are only being charged for actual items and services received.
- Your new Medicare card was sent automatically by mail to the address on file with Social Security.
- If you have not received your new Medicare card, call **StateWide at 800-333-4374.**



StateWide is committed to providing education about Medicare Fraud, Patient's Rights, & other important issues. If you or your organization would like to request a presenter from

StateWide, please call us at **800-333-4374**, or fill out a presentation form on our Website. nysenior.org

* Source: FBI, Staff Calculations; Senator Gillibrand Report

How Will Medicare Pay for my Durable Medical Equipment in 2019?

In 2019, Medicare Beneficiaries will be able to purchase Durable Medical Equipment (DME) from any supplier who is enrolled in Medicare. They will not be limited, as in previous years, to using only those suppliers who have been awarded contracts by Medicare. Wheelchairs, oxygen equipment and supplies, walkers, and hospital beds are some examples of DME.

An increased choice of medical suppliers is a good thing, but Medicare beneficiaries must remain vigilant! Taking these 4 steps and asking questions to your DME supplier will help you identify your out of pocket costs ahead of time. (Start Date - January 1, 2019)

1 Are your doctors and suppliers currently enrolled in Medicare?

- Medicare will only cover your DME if your doctors and DME suppliers are enrolled in Medicare.
- Doctors and suppliers must meet strict standards to enroll and stay enrolled in Medicare.

2 Do you have a Doctor's prescription for the DME?

- Medicare Part B (Medical Insurance) covers medically necessary DME that your doctor or health care provider prescribes for use in your home.
- In Original Medicare you pay 20% of the Medicare-approved amount, and the Part B deductible applies.
- If you have a Medicare Advantage Plan, you will need to contact your plan to review their coverage for DME.

3 Does your DME supplier participate in Medicare?

- If suppliers participate in Medicare, they have agreed to accept Medicare's amount as payment in full.
- If suppliers do not participate in Medicare they may or may not choose to accept Medicare's amount as payment in full. Your out of pocket costs would vary.

4 What happens if your supplier doesn't participate in Medicare & chooses not to accept Medicare's amount as payment in full?

- There is no limit on the amount the supplier can charge you.
- You may have to pay the entire bill (Medicare's share as well as your coinsurance and any deductible) at the time you get the DME.
- The supplier will send the bill to Medicare for you, but you'll have to wait for Medicare to reimburse you later for its share of the charge.

If you would like more information about DME coverage in 2019, **Call: 800-333-4374.**



BEWARE OF SCAMS

If you receive equipment or supplies not ordered by your doctor or if you receive FREE equipment in person or on the phone, call StateWide at **800-333-4374**. We can help you check your Medicare Summary Notice for incorrect charges to your Medicare number.

The New York Home Care Crisis Coalition is a group of advocates, community-based organizations, health and human service agency professionals, providers, and local government organizations throughout NYS collaborating together to seek adequate, and affordable home care for all who need it, regardless of payer or geographic location.

EXPLAIN THE CRISIS:

- **Growing Need:** The current population of New Yorkers age 65 and older is estimated at over 2.9 million and is expected to approach 4.4 million by the year 2040. (NYS Office for the Aging data, County Data Book).
- **Inadequate Home Health Aide Services:** Both the Medicaid and Non-Medicaid populations are underserved.
- **Consequences of Insufficient home care workforce:** Elders face delayed discharge from hospital or require costlier institutionalization rather than preferred (and less expensive services at home).
- **Decreasing numbers of available informal caregivers** will increase the demand for home care.
- **The human dignity of all persons requires that they** receive care when it is needed, regardless of payer.

AIMS OF THE CAMPAIGN:

- **Raise awareness** about the inadequate home care services in New York State and **seek solutions** to provide accessible, affordable, and available home health care for people who need it in NYS.
- Raise Public Awareness about the growing need for age-friendly communities and health systems.

- Seek more qualified home health care workers.
- Improve the quality of the home health delivery system in NYS.
- Improve the quality of life of elders who access home care.

TRANSPORTATION ISSUES:

Recently, Coalition members formed working groups to examine the issue of Transportation as it pertains to the lack of home care workers in the community. We surveyed our members and consumers around the state and found out the following information:

Geographic Characteristics:

- Difficult weather conditions throughout much of year.
- Rural, hilly, isolated areas that create long distances between cases.

Challenges

- Limited mass transit.
- Long travel time, short visits.
- Cost of auto maintenance, lack of mileage reimbursement.
- Aides not getting paid a living wage.

Model Solutions:

- Multiple Aide agencies to collaborate & set-up zone areas of service allowing aides to work in smaller areas.
- Subsidize transportation.
- Funding for innovative programs to be piloted around the state.

Call StateWide to share your opinions, views and solutions - 800-333-4374



Convention 2018

This year's Annual Convention took place on October 9, 10, 11 at the Saratoga Springs Holiday Inn. Over 150 members from around the state met to hear about the latest developments in the field of Aging in New York State. Participants viewed the documentary *Reimagining of Aging* and held lively discussions on how current policies need to be adjusted in order to accommodate a growing population with changing needs. We heard from New York State Assembly Aging Committee Chair Donna Lupardo on the priorities for her committee in the coming year, and presented her with a Special Appreciation Award for her dedication to the issues facing seniors.

Elections for the new Executive Board were held. Executive Board members were installed by the mayor of Saratoga Springs, Honorable Meg Kelly. Outgoing President Helen Sanders and 1st VP Darlene White were honored at the Gala event receiving awards for their efforts and commitment to the organization for the past 6 years.

Our new Executive Board Members are:

- President: Mario C. Henry, NYC
- 1st VP: Ann Converso, Western NY
- 2nd VP: Susan Schrader, North Country
- Secretary: Carolyn Parker, NYC
- Asst. Secretary: Nelsa Selover, Finger Lakes
- Treasurer: Robert Sinacore, Capital District
- Assistant Treasurer: Sharon Murray-Cohen, Hudson Valley.

On the final day, the members held discussions and voted on our State and Federal Agendas to be implemented in 2019.



Officers (L to R): Mario Henry, Ann Converso, Susan Schrader, Hon. Meg Kelly, Carolyn Parker, and Nelsa Selover





Medicare Patient's Rights Helpline 1-800-333-4374



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New Individual Members:

Mary & Robert Abes	Oceanside
Muriel Alleyne	Brooklyn
Elaine Allman	Jamaica
Nora Baratto	Latham
Anne Brueckner	Rhinebeck
Mertel James & Lorna Christie	Brooklyn
Vicki Clark	Potsdam
Ruth Connell	Brooklyn
George Connell	Brooklyn
Margaret Dafeldecker	Warnerville
Phyllis Doane	Canton
Jocelyn Downes	Brooklyn
Edna Estime	New York
Betty Filmore	Brooklyn
Maria Geizer	Saratoga Spr.
Adiel Gillette	Arverne
Patricia Gregory	Brooklyn
Floyd Gulnick	Kingston
Flynn "Candy" Halsey	Bronx
Sally Hardenburg	Williamsville
Gerald & Patricia Hart	Waterford
Sybil Harte	Brooklyn
Ada Heredia	New York
David Hoock	Buffalo
Elizabeth Johnson	Poughkeepsie
Elizabeth Johnson	Poughkeepsie
Beverly Johnson-Keeler	Saratoga Spr.
Jennifer Jordan	Brooklyn
Robert Kasprak	New Windsor
Shirley Kent	Brooklyn
Elizabeth Martin	Brooklyn
Susan McCombes	Buffalo
Kevin McNally	Brooklyn
Karen Miller	Kenmore
Celia Miller	Brooklyn
Gloria Miller	Brooklyn
Harold Moran	Saratoga Spr.
Precious Morgan	Buffalo
John Frederick Newton	New York
Evelyn Nyman	Brooklyn
June O'Toole	Waterford
Lola Parks-Guerra	Jamaica

New Individual Members (cont.):

Enid Pettinger	Jamaica
Estella Phillip	Brooklyn
Steve Rabinowitz	Brooklyn
Johnny Singletary	Buffalo
MaryJane Spiak	Troy
Jorge Tait	Brooklyn
Cathy Pete & Ron Tebo	Russell
Elaine Terry	Brooklyn

New Lifetime Members:

Maria Latimer	Bronx
Nina Lynch	Rhinebeck

New Organization Members:

Glen Cove Senior Center	Glen Cove
Settled & Staying in Place	Saugerties
St. Gabriel's Senior Citizen Center	Brooklyn

Kryzak Fund Contributors:

Isilma Alleyne	Brooklyn
Elaine Allman	Jamaica
Susan Beckley	Ithaca
B. Pyne Bertsche	Bronx
Gerry & Andrea Burger	Averill Park
Hazel Collman-Foster	Elmont
Mary Degon	Malone
Antoinette Emers	Bronx
Edna Estime	New York
Lowell Green	Bronx
Jaycee Holden	Brooklyn
Laura Jandrew	Massena
Elizabeth Johnson	Poughkeepsie
Wilma & Jonathan Lawrence	Brooktondale
Harold Moran	Saratoga Spr.
Suzanne Motheral	Ithaca
John Frederick Newton	New York
Carolyn Parker	Bronx
Enid Pettinger	Jamaica
Carol Pittman	Brooklyn
Diane Adele Pomeroy	Spring Valley
Sigilfredo Roman	Bronx
Helen Sanders	Buffalo
Susan Schrader	Ft. Covington

Kryzak Fund (cont.):

William & Judith Schultz	Scotia
Robert Sinacore	Albany
John & Kathy Skelly	Heuvelton
Sullivan County Legislative Action Comm.	Kiamesha



HONOR SOMEONE

You may wish to have your contribution to NY StateWide Senior Action Council serve

as a gift honoring someone or in memory of someone. We will feature those contributions with a notice in our newsletter.

CONTRIBUTOR:

Priscilla Bassett

in memory of long time Board member, Rochelle Mangual

CONTRIBUTOR:

Diane Owens

in memory of her mother, Erma Owens

CONTRIBUTOR:

Gail Myers

in honor of the birth of her granddaughter, Jordyn Nola Iosefson

CONTRIBUTOR:

Maria Alvarez

in honor of Helen Sanders, who has completed her term as President of the Board



Yes I WANT TO JOIN/RENEW MY NY StateWide Senior Action Council Membership. 2019 Annual dues are due January 1st.



Check box:

- ☐ Individual Membership \$ 20/year
☐ Couple Membership \$ 25/year
☐ Lifetime Membership \$ 150/individual
☐ Lifetime Membership \$ 200/couple
☐ Organization Membership \$ 75/year

Check box:

- ☐ New Member
☐ Renewal
☐ Contribution \$ _____
☐ Rose Kryzak Legacy Fund \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

County _____ Affiliated Organization _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

You can contact us at **518-436-1006**. Please make your check payable to: **NY StateWide Senior Action Council**

Send this form to: **NY StateWide Senior Action Council, 275 State Street, Albany, NY 12210**



Thank-you to the Funeral Consumers Alliance of L.I./NYC

In 2018, the Funeral Consumers Alliance of

L.I./NYC disbanded their operations. We appreciate a donation they made to NY StateWide Senior Action Council, in recognition of our work to educate and advocate for seniors. The donation will allow us to continue some of their work to educate and advocate for consumers with funeral needs. We look forward to expanding our Patients Rights Toolkits to include funeral consumer rights as part of planning for end of life decisions. We will be producing new material on this topic, including a Telephone Teach in during Spring 2019.

Remember New York StateWide Senior Action Council in your will, retirement plan, trust, IRA or life insurance policy.

For more information, or to discuss this further, please call:

María Alvarez or Gail Myers at

518-436-1006



STATE WIDE

New York StateWide Senior Action Council, Inc.

275 State Street, Albany, NY 12210 • 800-333-4374 • Fax (518) 436-7642

www.nysenior.org

Our State Bill Tracker is updated monthly and posted to our website www.nysenior.org.
If you would like a copy mailed to you, please call our office, 518-436-1006.



StateWide Calendars Are Available!

If you would like to order calendars for you or your group, call StateWide at 800-333-4374 and we will ship them to you. Calendars include the Medicare Preventive Services Checklist and Important Telephone Hotline Numbers for Seniors.

Order yours today!

Thank-you to our calendar sponsors:

Medicare & Medicaid Advisory Group

Upcoming Telephone Teach-ins



Jan. 22, 10-11 am

Helping Older Persons and Caregivers Obtain Community Based Services & Long Term Care.

Feb. 5, 10-11 am

Helping Older Persons and Caregivers Deal with Nursing Home Problems: the Role of the Long Term Care Ombudsman.

Call 800-333-4374 to register.

If you missed one of our past Teach-ins, visit nysenior.org. We've included recorded playback from our 2017 & 2018 Teach-ins.



NY STATEWIDE SENIOR ACTION COUNCIL

Annual Convention **October 15-17, 2019**

Holiday Inn, Saratoga Springs, New York