

New York StateWide Senior Action Council

MEMBER UPDATE

FALL 2023



Maria Alvarez

Looking Toward 2024!

As we continue to make a meaningful impact in the lives of the older New Yorkers, your generosity plays a crucial role in sustaining and expanding our

initiatives, allowing us to:

Amplify Our Outreach: With your financial support, we can reach a wider audience, raise awareness, and advocate for policies that promote the well-being of the elderly.

Enhance Program Offerings: Funding enables us to develop and implement programs that directly benefit senior citizens as we advocate and promote our membership driven agenda each year.

Advocate for Change: Your contributions empower us to engage in meaningful advocacy at local, regional, and national levels. We can work towards policies that address the unique needs of the elderly and ensure their rights are protected.

Educate and Inform: Financial support allows us to create educational materials, host workshops, and conduct awareness campaigns that educate the public about the challenges faced by the elderly and the importance of supporting them.

To contribute, please fill out the form in this newsletter, visit our website (nysenior.org) or contact our office at [1-800-333-4374]. Your tax-free donation, no matter the size, will make a significant impact and is greatly appreciated.

You may also consider spreading the word by giving the Gift Of StateWide, and also volunteering your time.

Thank you for being a vital part of New York StateWide Senior Action Council. Together, we can continue to make a positive difference in the lives of the New York's seniors & families.

Happy Holidays!

Maria Alvarez
StateWide Executive Director

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Medicare, Medicare Fraud and Patient's Rights Helpline 800-333-4374

It's all about the Budget.

The federal fiscal year ended on September 30th without a new budget in place. Instead, Congress continued spending until November 17th at prior year's funding levels. In the midst of these negotiations, the House of Representatives had a shutdown while a new Speaker was being named. Now, Congress has averted a shutdown with another CR (Continuing Resolution) that for the first time, creates two tiers to provide a framework for negotiations.

TIER 1—Expiring on January 19, 2024

1	AGRICULTURE—FDA
2	ENERGY—WATER
3	MILITARY CONSTRUCTION
4	TRANSPORTATION—HUD SPENDING BILLS

TIER 2—Expiring on February 2, 2024

1	COMMERCE—JUSTICE—SCIENCE
2	DEFENSE
3	FINANCIAL SERVICES—GENERAL GOVT.
4	HOMELAND SECURITY
5	INTERIOR ENVIRONMENT
6	LABOR—HHS—EDUCATION
7	LEGISLATIVE BRANCH
8	STATE—FOREIGN OPERATION BILLS

Budget advocacy must continue, since the CR is only a short term fix. Appropriations bills need to be passed to budget for the current fiscal year, even though we will be almost half-way through by the time action is taken.

It is important to note that a compromise had already been struck among the former House Speaker, Senate Majority Leader Schumer and the White House that budget negotiations would try to constrain spending by setting appropriation limits based on last year's spending. As advocates, we note that continuing merely at the same level as last year is in reality a cut in services. However, given this compromise was already agreed to last Spring in the "Fiscal Responsibility Act" as part of the debt ceiling talks, we say – stick to the agreement!

A major concern: some members of the House of Representatives are insisting on budget cuts to important human services programs that, in reality need to grow, not shrink. Among these proposals are a Debt Commission that would meet behind closed doors, without transparency or accountability, and could fast track cuts to Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, food stamps, and other vital benefits.

NEED A PRESENTATION?

If you or your organization would like to request a presenter from StateWide, please call StateWide at **1-800-333-4374**.

You can also scan the QR code with your smartphone and it will take you directly to an online form.



SOCIAL SECURITY: We do not support a Debt Commission and do not want to see it tacked on to the budget negotiations. This would allow changes to Social Security via a closed-door process to cut already modest earned benefits while avoiding public accountability. All attempts to reform social spending programs need to be done in the open, using the regular hearing & Committee processes (not fast tracked) and give constituents the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposals.

MEDICARE: As always, our position is—A Good Offense is the Best Defense! We support HR33 that would expand Medicare to include vision, hearing, and dental. NY sponsors of HR 33:

- Rep. Bowman, Jamaal [CD-16]
- Rep. Espallat, Adriano [CD-13]
- Rep. Higgins, Brian [CD-26]
- Rep. Meng, Grace [CD-6]
- Rep. Nadler, Jerrold [CD-12]
- Rep. Ocasio-Cortez, Alexandria [CD-14]
- Rep. Tonko, Paul [CD-20]
- Rep. Torres, Ritchie [CD-15]
- Rep. Meeks, Gregory W. [CD-5]
- Rep. Goldman, Daniel S. [CD-10]



- ✓ If you are represented by the co-sponsors of these bills, call (202) 225-3121 to thank them.
- ✓ If your Representative is not on this list, call to ask them to sign on.
- ✓ We would also like to see other expansions of Medicare benefits, including long term care!
- ✓ We support improving the Social Security COLA (cost of living) adjustment, and increasing benefits.
- ✓ Keep communicating with your Congress members so they know what's important to you!



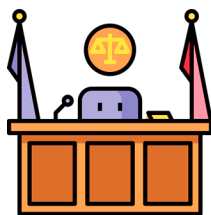
If you don't know who represents you in Congress please call us at 800-333-4374 for assistance.



This holiday season, please consider gifting a tax-deductible StateWide membership to your family and friends. Your grandchildren today are the seniors of tomorrow. Let's bring them into the fight for their future.

Call our Helpline at 800-333-4374 or visit our website at nysenior.org to learn more about how you can help us reach our fundraising goals or make a donation online. *Thank you!*

The State Legislature is presently in recess, returning in early January. To begin the legislative cycle, the Governor will deliver the State of the State Message, followed by the Budget Message at the month's end. The Governor has voiced opposition to tax increases and urged state agencies to submit budget requests without increments from the previous budget. However, as highlighted in our Federal Issues article, maintaining a flat budget can effectively result in cuts due to rising costs in various sectors such as goods, services, labor, and more. This extends to individual benefits like Meals on Wheels and state-contracted services, emphasizing the need for careful consideration in budget allocations.



Discussions about emergent service needs necessitate ensuring that increased spending doesn't lead to cuts in existing allocations. The call for heightened funding resonates across aging services, Medicaid, health quality surveillance, and various other programs, given the simultaneous rise in population and service demands. Despite ongoing studies for a Master Plan for Aging, the final plan won't be available until Fall 2024, after the impending budget cycle deadline of April 1.

As always, StateWide will conduct briefings for members in February via ZOOM/phone. While specific details will only emerge in February, early awareness indicates the **need for calls and legislative visits to secure funding for critical StateWide helplines—namely, the Patients' Rights Hotline and the Managed Care Consumer**

Assistance Program. These programs play a vital role in guiding individuals through the healthcare system, upholding their rights, and facilitating informed decision-making.

StateWide encourages members to plan for active engagement with state Assembly and Senate representatives in January, stressing the importance of these services in the broader community. Every supportive voice contributes to sustaining & enhancing these crucial programs.

IMPORTANT FACTS ABOUT YOUR MEDICARE CARD



1. **Your Medicare card contains sensitive information** such as your name, Medicare number, and the effective dates of your coverage. Treat it with the same level of importance as you would your social security card or credit card.
2. **Guard your card.** Identity thieves may use your Medicare details to obtain medical services or prescription drugs. Always keep your card in a secure location, and don't share your Medicare number with strangers.
3. **Be wary of unsolicited calls, texts or emails claiming to be from Medicare** and requesting your Medicare number. Medicare will never contact you by phone or email asking for personal information.
4. **Check your Medicare statements regularly.** If you notice any discrepancies or services you didn't receive, report them to the **NYS Senior Medicare Patrol at 1-800-333-4374.**

Supported by grant number 90MPPG01701 from ACL.

During Convention 2023, we saluted the newest group of graduates from our 2nd Annual StateWide Legislative Action Team training. YOU can be part of the 3rd Team Training, starting on January 18th at 3PM.

Member Benefit!

This free training is exclusively for paid members. You participate from the comfort of your home on your computer/smartphone through Zoom, or if you don't have computer access you can dial in by telephone. **We will spend 6 sessions outlining important state and federal policy issues and learning the advocacy skills needed to be comfortable sharing your stories or getting your point of view heard.**

Each team member gets a book developed for the program and graduates of the program get special recognition at Convention.

Why Join SLAT?

GAIN SKILLS such as:

- community organizing
- writing effective letters to the editor
- communicating with legislators
- tracking legislation
- forming relationships with elected state and federal representatives
- staying informed on public policy issues impacting older New Yorkers
- becoming a leader in your StateWide Chapter
- mentoring others with the skills you gain.....and so much more.



StateWide Legislative Action Team Members (SLAT)

(L to R): Charlie Battaglia, Peg Graham, Henry Moss, Evette Weeks, Jacynth Stewart, Martha Steuding, Linda Edmundson

DIVE DEEP into issues from expert special guest speakers and learn more about:

- Social Security
- Medicare and Medicaid
- Universal Health Coverage
- Long Term Care Issues
- Budget issuesand more.

With every topic we provide tools to educate others and to be an effective advocate. You will be mailed chapters to complete your SLAT book.

Register now – call 800-333-4374.

Hope to see you on January 18!

SLAT SCHEDULE 2024: 3:00PM - 5:00 PM

January 18	April 18
February 15	May 16
March 21	June 20



As we are ending the open enrollment period for Medicare this year, we once again reflect on the complex, confusing and inadequate health care insurance model that we live with. **We reaffirm our stance – fix the health care system, take out the profit and reinvest in benefits and make sure everyone has coverage – from cradle to grave.**

We need comprehensive benefits, low premiums and out of pocket costs, no closed networks, coverage no matter where we travel, live or work and simplicity. That's why we are supporting Improved Medicare for All.

Every year we have a presentation at our Convention on Improved Medicare for All – and this year we continued that work in presentations in the community.



"Healing Us" Documentary & Panelists, 2023 Convention

FEDERAL LEGISLATION

We can push for Improved Medicare for All at both the state or federal level. One thing we know – public polling shows that voters support making this change, so we need to contact our legislators – on both the state and federal level – to urge them to adopt these bills.

Bills were introduced this past spring in both the House of Representatives and the US Senate to create a truly universal health care program

covering all Americans. HR 3421 has 12 **co-sponsors from NY (Bowman, Clarke, Espaillat, Goldman, Higgins, Meeks, Meng, Nadler, Ocasio-Cortez, Tonko, Torres, and Velazquez.)** S.1665 has been introduced by Senator Bernie Sanders and Sen. Gillibrand is a co-sponsor. We understand that Sen. Schumer supports it too, but as the Senate Majority Leader he rarely co-sponsors bills. ***If your legislator is listed, call them and thank them for their support. If your legislator is missing from the list of co-sponsors, call them and urge them to add their name in support.***

STATE LEGISLATION

Bills were introduced this summer in both the state Senate and Assembly called the New York Health Act. We have been advocating for this bill for years, and this year welcome the new lead Assembly sponsor, Health Committee Chair Amy Paulin who has replaced retired Chair Gottfried as the prime sponsor.

What does it do? S7590 /A7897 would eliminate private health insurance, provide coverage for every New Yorker with better benefits than most people now have – including long term care – and without out of pocket costs. For most New Yorkers, the bill would save them money compared to their current out of pocket costs. An additional benefit, it would save local governments money, on the portion of funds set aside for Medicaid costs – and that could translate into savings for real property tax payers. The bill also ensures a health care planning process to ensure quality and accessible care throughout the state.

STATEWIDE STRATEGIC PLAN 2024—2027

Seeking Committee Members: Thank you to all participants who contributed feedback to our strategic plan. Now, the work begins. We are looking for members who are interested in working on the committees outlined below. The only requirement for participation is paid membership of StateWide. For membership or more information, please contact our Helpline at 800-333-4374.

GOVERNANCE	FINANCE	MEMBERSHIP	PROGRAMMING	ADVOCACY
Enhance the Board's ability to support StateWide's mission	Ensure current and future financial stability by diversifying funding sources	Recruit and develop StateWide's membership and chapters	Gather information from members, community, and partners to guide programming & services	Encourage proactive engagement of members and community partners in StateWide's Legislative Agenda

Convention 2023

Each year at our Convention, StateWide awards outstanding seniors for their leadership to improve the lives of older residents. *Congratulations to Lowell Green, Bob Sinacore, Susan Schrader & Judith Villaroel!*

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2023 AWARD WINNERS!



Lowell Green
Robert E. O'Donnell
Memorial Award



Bob Sinacore
Rose Kryzak
Advocacy Award



Susan Schrader
Paul E. Harenberg
Award

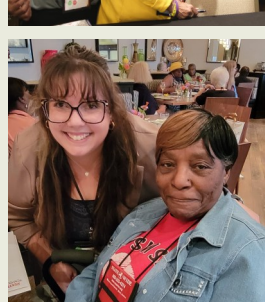


Judith Villaroel
Michael Burgess
Award

Medicare, Medicare Fraud and Patient's Rights Helpline 800-333-4374



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New Individual Members:

Mary Anderson	Buffalo
Judy Arian-Eson	Albany
Maria Arias	Brooklyn
Phyllis Atkinson	Buffalo
Angelia Bartholomew	Brooklyn
George Btag	Albany
Carol Byrne	Lisbon
Edna Campbell	Brooklyn
Judy Esterquest	Manhasset
Michele Gaskin	Brooklyn
Geneva Gillyard	Brooklyn
Sandra Gonzalez	Albany
Patricia Gregory	Brooklyn
Dorothy Hall	Brooklyn
Janet Hamm	Buffalo
Virginia Harper	Dunkirk
Mary & Robert Hebert	Rouses Point
Helen Hutchins	Minetto
Joyce Sam Jackson	Brooklyn
Molly Karp	Albany
Linda Lam	Elmhurst
Marcia Larabee	Albany
Nancy Lawton	Schenectady
Carolyn McGrath	Massena
Maryl Mendillo	Aurora
Beth Nivin	Staten Island
Bob O'Connell	Clifton Park
JoAnne & Dr. Hussein Omar	Liberty
Estella Phillips	Brooklyn
Leila Reid	Brooklyn
Michael Romano	Rome
Dorothea Sabir	Brooklyn
Nancy Schaef	Saugerties
Dan Shalofsky	Bellmore
Stewart Sharpe	Hagaman
Clara & Rabbi Nachman Simon	Delmar
Morton Singer	Long Is. City
FritzAnn Surace	Norwood
Joan & Byron Tzou	Maspeth
Sandra Underwood	Brooklyn
Sarah White	Massena
Faye Wilson	Nanuet

New Organization Members:

Community Living Advocates	Liverpool
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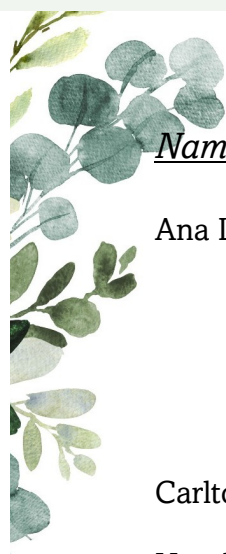
Kryzak Fund Contributors:

Vanessa Birmingham	Buffalo
Barbara Boudreau	Albany
Mary Chapman	Ithaca
Ann Converso	Lawtons
Judy Esterquest	Manhasset
Christina Giordano	Albany
Mark Hannay	New York
Mario Henry	Flushing
Joel Herbst	Rego Park
Elizabeth Kryzak	Flushing
Barb McBurnie	Parishville
Mary Pritchard	Schenectady
Quad Town Senior Citizens	Brasher Falls
Leanne Rorick	Honeoye Falls
Helen Sanders	Buffalo
Bob Sinacore	Albany

New Lifetime Members:

Patricia Bynum	Bronx
Kathleen Collins	New York
Sheila Davis	Kings
Winifred Dottin/Aikins	New York
Carriann Grexa-Allen	Hamilton
Merlene Groome	Queens
Maxine Hall	Erie
Wanda Hickson-Dobson	Kings
Edward Goldberg & Eileen Letzeiser	Westchester
Lorraine Moran	Tompkins
Gail Myers	Albany
Gina Newton	Bronx
Donna Sawyer	Albany
Martha Steuding	Ulster

You may wish to have your contribution to StateWide serve as a gift honoring someone or in memory of someone. We will feature those contributions with a notice in our newsletter.



Name:

Ana Luisa Alvarez

Carlton Doane

Harold Greene

Bob Miller

Carolyn Parker

Lena B. Sierra

In Memory of

Contributors:

Joan Akpan, Sarah Askew, Stefania Buta, Gene Dumlaio, Tiffany Erhard, Marcus Harazin, Gail Myers, Candy Rivera-Whitehead, Leslie Sierra
Western Chapter of StateWide

Maria Alvarez

Maria Alvarez, Gene Dumlaio

Maria Alvarez, Lowell Green
Rick Moore and Family
Gloria Young and Family

Maria Alvarez
NYC Chapter, StateWide

Leslie Sierra





IN MEMORY OF CARLTON DOANE

Carlton is a past President of the Board of Directors of StateWide (2008 - 2012). During Carlton's leadership, senior citizens in New York State were beginning to adapt to changes in the way health care was accessed. Our organization was one in six awarded the Managed Care Consumer Assistance Project and ensured activism to maintain programs such as the Elderly Pharmaceutical Insurance Coverage, both programs that advocate and assist New York's elders today.

It was a transformative time for StateWide as an organization and spurred our growth into the organization that we have today. Carlton was also very active in StateWide's North Country Chapter, along with his participation and leadership in local organizations in the North Country. We extend our sympathy to his family in these difficult times.



IN MEMORY OF HAROLD F. GREENE JR.

Harold was a member of the Board of Directors of StateWide representing Albany / Capital Region. He was also Treasurer of StateWide's Board of Directors ending his 2 terms in 2012. Harold and his wife Eva were an integral part of ensuring that our organization made a smooth transition during a time when StateWide was undergoing an administrative change.

In 2006, Harold & Eva received StateWide's Paul Harenberg Award for working to train and educate others about important issues and programs benefiting seniors.

In 2011, StateWide awarded Harold the Rose Kryzak Advocacy Award for an advocate and leader on public policy issues locally and at the state level to promote the well being of older New Yorkers.

On a personal note, I can say that Harold and I worked closely for many months as he helped me assume my role as Executive Director at StateWide. He was kind, unassuming, and always sought the higher good.

StateWide owes a debt of gratitude to Harold Greene, and he will be greatly missed.

Maria Alvarez

Executive Director



IN MEMORY OF CAROLYN PARKER

Carolyn was a former Secretary of the Board of Directors for StateWide, current Secretary for the NYC Chapter, and very involved in the promotion of the rights and dignity of older adults. Carolyn was also a retiree of CWA local 1180 and a resident of the Bronx. We will miss her dearly!



New York StateWide Senior Action Council, Inc
275 State Street, Albany, NY 12210 • 800-333-4374 • Fax 518-436-7642
www.nysenior.org



MEMBERSHIP DUES

**YOUR DUES ARE DUE IF THERE IS AN
ASTERISK* ON YOUR MAILING LABEL**

Check box:

- ☐ Individual Membership \$ 20/yr
☐ Couple Membership \$ 25/yr
☐ Lifetime Membership \$ 150/ind.
☐ Lifetime Membership \$ 200/couple
☐ Organization Membership \$ 75/yr

Check box:

- ☐ New Member ☐ Renewal ☐ Gift of Membership*

*Gifted by _____

Contributions

- ☐ Rose Kryzak Legacy Fund \$ _____
☐ In Honor of _____ \$ _____
☐ In Memory of _____ \$ _____

Name(s) _____

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
Mail this form and your check to: c/o Gail Myers, 46 Commonwealth Drive, Glenmont, NY 12077

All dues and contributions are tax deductible