

New York StateWide Senior Action Council

MEMBER UPDATE

DEC 2025



Maria Alvarez

HAPPY HOLIDAYS – AND AN AGE STRONG 2026!

It's clear that the past months have moved at a dizzying pace.

Yet through all the change, one constant remains: our quality of life is stronger when we work together as a community with a shared commitment to improving circumstances for older New Yorkers and their families.

In 2026 we plan to harness our collective efforts to insist —of government, our communities, and society at large—that we be treated with the respect and consideration owed to those who make up 20 per cent of the population, have built and sustained New York State's economy, and who continue to contribute at an impressive rate of 40 percent to the local economy. Our wisdom, experience, and abilities deserve recognition, and we must ensure that policies and funding support our ability to live with dignity, affordability, and independence in the communities we cherish.

Next year we will launch our Age Strong campaign in partnership with fellow organizations, meeting with policymakers and elected officials to ensure that our voices are heard. To make this initiative successful, we need the active participation and support of our members, their friends and families.

Your generosity is essential to sustaining and expanding this work. With your support, we can **amplify outreach, enhance vital programs, strengthen advocacy at every level, and expand education and awareness efforts.**

To contribute, please complete the form in this newsletter (page 15), visit nysenior.org, or call 1-800-333-4374. Every tax-deductible donation makes a meaningful difference.

KEEP STRONG – AGE STRONG HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

Maria Alvarez
Executive Director

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

STATE ISSUES UPDATE



More seniors in the state are having an affordability crisis than ever before.

State budget equity for services and benefits for older New Yorkers is essential to secure benefits, fund service providers, and address unmet need. Join StateWide's advocacy efforts to promote a state budget that fairly funds the services needed by older residents.

NEW YORK STATE BUDGET IN FINANCIAL DISTRESS DUE TO FEDERAL CUTS

The NYS Budget year runs from April 1 – March 31.

The NYS budget is composed of approximately 2/3 federal funding. Now, new federal cuts of \$8.4 billion annually are estimated by the Fiscal Policy Institute. The federal government has cut:

✗ Medicaid ✗ Food Stamps ✗ Housing Assistance
✗ Hospitals ✗ Nursing Homes ✗ Clinics

and increased the number of uninsured.

The cuts will blow a significant hole in New York's budget and this will impact across the boards, all services, all communities, all New Yorkers – including services for the elderly and aging.

The next state budget negotiations will be more difficult, as we advocate for an increase in funding for aging services, including StateWide's Patients' Rights and Medicare/EPIC helplines.

THE NEED FOR INVESTMENT IN AGING SERVICES IS CLEAR

More than 1/3 of all NY households have residents age 65 or older. One in four New Yorkers are older residents, that's 3.6 million people!

Approximately 30% are functionally impaired by chronic health conditions. Yet, the NYS Office for the Aging (NYSOFA) funded services reach only 1 million NYers per year. This includes all services:

- information and assistance
- benefits counseling
- legal assistance
- caregiver supports
- transportation
- case management
- nutrition
- in home services, etc.

Meanwhile the population age 75 and older (the typical user of NYSOFA services) numbered 1,552,425 in 2023.

While the current year's budget invested funds to address waiting lists for aging services, it did not invest in building the capacity of the aging services network of providers to meet the needs of an aging population.

With the adoption & implementation of the new Master Plan on Aging, we will be calling for an increased commitment by the Governor to fund needed services.



WE WILL ALSO BE PROTESTING ANY PROPOSED CUTS TO MEDICAID, as over 95,000 older NYers



receive Medicaid nursing home benefits and more than 300,000 get Medicaid funded home care.



ACTION ALERT: STATE

The state does not sufficiently fund unmet need in community services for older people to age with dignity in their community of choice.

Your voice is needed – three ACTION steps

1. **Contact Governor Hochul now**, while she is preparing the next budget and the State of the State Address, by calling 518-474-8390 or writing to: Gov. Hochul, Executive Chamber, Albany NY 12224.

Message: My name is _____ and I am a constituent _____ (name of your town/city) and I am contacting you about an important issue to me. I urge you to make increased funding services for older residents a priority in your budget. We must have budget equity to ensure our wish to continue to live in our community.

2. **Make plans to join us in Albany on May 11th for our Senior Grassroots Day**

Get briefings on current issues impacting older New Yorkers, hear from State legislative leaders, speak with your own legislative representatives. (see page 6)

3. **Exercise your membership benefit – a free, interactive course on improving your advocacy skills** that you join from your own home. Now is the time to sign up for StateWide's Legislative Action Team (SLAT) 2026, to take a deep dive into aging public policy issues like Medicare, Medicaid, Older Americans Act and Social Security issues and hone your skills for successful legislative advocacy. (see page 7)

ACTION ALERT: FEDERAL

Congress still needs to pass a full budget for the current fiscal year. Call your Congressman and urge them to fully fund programs for older Americans, and to pass the bi-partisan Reauthorization of the Older Americans Act, S2120.

Dial the Capitol Switchboard at 202-224-3121 to be connected. You'll need to provide your zip code and ask to speak with your House representative.

Message:

My name is _____ and I am a constituent _____ (name of your town/city) and I am contacting you about an important issue to me. Please make renewal of the Older Americans Act a priority issue so that older residents can count on federal funding to ensure our wish to continue to live in our community.



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

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.



FEDERAL ISSUES UPDATE



So many policy changes have happened on the Federal level since July, that we issued a special Federal Update to capture the impact on older New Yorkers. And, no sooner than the ink was dry, some implementation dates were changed to impact us even sooner. On top of that, when the federal fiscal year started October 1st, there was no funding agreement so the government, and many of the services we rely on were impacted with benefit delays and insufficient staff to help resolve problems or process new benefit applications.

The US Senate and the House of Representatives has passed a partial funding bill (Continuing Resolution or CR) that will reopen government, through January 31, 2026. This will ensure a full year of funding for SNAP (food stamps, ending the fear of benefits being delayed or denied if the government shuts down before September 30. Funding for Older Americans Act services (that support your local Office for the Aging services such as Congregant and Home Delivered Meals) were not fully funded yet.

The CR also addressed a funding problem in the July law. When there is a deficit, automatic cuts under the Statutory Pay As You Go Act of 2010 go into effect. It required Medicare cuts of \$500 billion in automatic cuts between 2027 and 2034. The CR overrode those cuts scheduled for this year to Medicare. This is good news, given how these cuts, along with Medicaid cuts being implemented, would destabilize the NY health delivery system.

Issues surrounding the December 31st expiration of enhanced premium supports for purchasing insurance on the Affordable Care Act Exchange had not been resolved. If Congress does not extend the law, 935,914 New Yorkers who purchase their insurance or enroll in Medicaid on NY State of Health are expected to be impacted, with many facing unaffordable premium hikes and the likelihood of becoming uninsured or become ineligible for coverage. That would impact all of us as hospital emergency rooms become overcrowded and health care costs for all rise to absorb the cost of caring for the uninsured.

The issues that were included in July's federal Budget Reconciliation Bill are:

MEDICARE

The new law denies Medicare to documented immigrants, with a few exceptions, who have been eligible for enrollment because they worked in the United States legally, paid into the system (Medicare payroll taxes) and qualify based on years of residency. (This ban started already for new applicants and will be in effect on January 1, 2027 for those currently enrolled.)

MEDICAID

Cuts in federal funding will impact access to providers and may result in the state discussing benefit cuts.

- KFF estimates that New York will receive 15% less in Medicaid funding over ten years.
- Requires Medicaid enrollees to recertify eligibility for benefits twice a year.

MEDICAID (cont.)

- If applying and under age 65, new work requirements will be in effect, with few exemptions, requiring beneficiaries to provide evidence of 80 hours of service (training, work or volunteering each month) as a condition of enrollment. This starts January 2027.
- Shortens Medicaid retroactive enrollment period from current 90 days to 30 days. Enrollees who qualify for Medicaid who are aged, blind or disabled will have a 60 day retroactive enrollment. (Starts January 2027) This will be particularly a problem causing significant out of pocket charges for nursing home care before Medicaid is approved.

The July law slashes billions of dollars from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

- The cuts will require the state to contribute funding toward administration of the program, previously funded by the federal government. 
- New work requirements for SNAP will include adults up to age 65, and will be in effect earlier than expected:
 - ⇒ December will mark the first full month that SNAP recipients are expected to begin certifying their compliance, and recipients who fail to meet the requirements for longer than three months will have their benefits terminated.
 - ⇒ This means New Yorkers under the age of 65 could be kicked off SNAP as a result of the new rules as soon as March 2026.

TAX CHANGES



The July law provides a temporary tax deduction, increasing the standard deduction for filers aged 65 and over for tax years 2025-2028.

It is a deduction and not a credit, therefore it does not provide any financial benefit for the majority of older adults whose income is too low to file an income tax return. The deduction authorized does NOT make Social Security tax free. The deduction is:

- \$6,000 for individual filers who earn up to \$75,000/year
- \$12,000 for couples earning up to \$175,000
- Lower deductions phase out completely for individuals with income above \$175,000 and couples above \$250,000.

The July law addressed the expiration of the income tax deduction of State & Local Taxes (SALT.)

- The deduction cap was raised from \$10,000 to \$40,000 for those making under \$500,000, effective beginning in the 2025 tax year, with a reduced benefit for those with incomes between \$500,000 - \$600,000/year.
- In 2026, the cap rises 1% each year through 2029.



To keep our members up to date on late breaking news, we

email our Weekly Round Up on Fridays.

If you are not receiving it, contact us at info@nysenior.org to make sure we have your correct email. If you do not have email, contact your Chapter president to ask for a volunteer who will share the information with you.

**New York StateWide Senior
Action Council presents:**

SENIOR GRASSROOTS DAY

MAY 11, 2026

WHERE

**Convention Center
Empire State Plaza
in Albany, N.Y.**

Plans are being made to provide free charter buses to Albany.

WHEN

Monday, May 11

Transportation is limited. Registration is required by

May 1, 2026

AGENDA

Briefing Time – 11 AM

After briefing, attendees to meet with State Legislators from their regions.

NOW MORE THAN EVER, YOUR VOICE IS NEEDED!

This is your chance to meet with lawmakers, share your story, and push for policies that support the health, financial security, and well-being of older adults.

YOUR ADVOCACY CAN DRIVE CHANGE.

Seniors are a powerful force in shaping public policy. Together, we can ensure lawmakers prioritize the issues that matter most to us. Your participation will make a difference!

- Sign Up Today! Contact us at 800-333-4374 to register.**
- Transportation Available:** Let us know if you need a ride to Albany.
- Bring Your Questions and Ideas:** This is your opportunity to have your concerns addressed by key decision-makers.

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



MAKE A DIFFERENCE

JOIN STATEWIDE'S 2026 LEGISLATIVE ACTION TEAM (SLAT)

SLAT is a FREE program offered *exclusively to paid StateWide members* who want to strengthen their voice on issues that matter to older New Yorkers.

LEARN FROM HOME

Participate from the comfort of your home by computer, smartphone, or telephone through ZOOM.

Six interactive sessions, where you'll explore state and federal policy topics and develop the skills and confidence to share your story, speak up, and influence change.

WHAT YOU'LL GAIN

Each participant receives a training book developed especially for SLAT. Graduates are honored with special recognition at StateWide's 2026 Annual Convention.

Through this program, you'll learn practical advocacy and leadership skills, including how to:

- Organize within your community
- Techniques for effective local advocacy
- Re-seeding our Grassroots efforts for the future

DIVE DEEPER INTO ISSUES

Expert guest speakers explore the major topics shaping the lives of older New Yorkers today:

- Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid
- Universal Health Coverage
- Long-Term Care and Home Care Issues
- State and Federal Budget Priorities

REGISTER TODAY!

Our first meeting will be JAN 15, 2026 at 3 PM.

To register, scan the QR code or call our **Helpline at 800-333-4374.**

Meetings are hosted by StateWide's Public Policy Committee.



SLAT SCHEDULE 2026:

3:00 PM - 5:00 PM

JAN 15 FEB 19 MAR 19

APR 16 MAY 21 JUN 18



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

NEW ONLINE APPLICATION & RENEWAL PROCESS FOR MEDICAID AND THE MEDICARE SAVINGS PROGRAM (MSP)

A major update is coming to the way New Yorkers apply for or renew their **Medicaid** and **Medicare Savings Program (MSP)** benefits. Beginning **September 30**, New York State is rolling out a **new online-only application and renewal system** for certain groups of beneficiaries. **The transition will first take place in New York City and the Capital District, and then expand to the entire state.**

This new process applies **only** to:

- Individuals enrolled in **both Medicare and Medicaid** (the “dual eligible” population)
- Individuals applying for or renewing the **Medicare Savings Program (MSP)**

If you fall into either category, you will eventually complete your application or renewal through the new online platform.

WHY THIS CHANGE IS HAPPENING



New York State is working to modernize and streamline benefit enrollment. The online system is designed to reduce paperwork, speed up processing, and allow applicants to track their status more easily. It also creates one uniform process across counties.

However, StateWide recognizes that not everyone has reliable computer access or feels comfortable navigating online systems—and that’s why support is still available.

YOU ARE NOT REQUIRED TO APPLY ALONE

Even though the system is online, **you can still receive personal, one-on-one help** with your Medicaid or MSP application or renewal.

Whether you:

- Prefer talking to a real person
- Don’t have a computer
- Aren’t confident using online forms



StateWide’s counselors remain ready to assist older adults & caregivers with the entire process.

Counselors can answer questions, review paperwork, guide you through online steps, or help complete the application on your behalf.

WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW

- ✓ **If you live in NYC or the Capital District**, expect to use the new system for any Medicaid or MSP applications or renewals after **September 30**.
- ✓ **If you live in another region**, the change will reach your county shortly after.
- ✓ **Gather key documents early**, such as proof of income, Medicare card, and any renewal notices you’ve received.
- ✓ **Contact StateWide for help**—counselors can walk you through what to expect and how to prepare. 800-333-4374

NEW TWIST: FAKE DOCTOR CALLS ABOUT A NEW PLASTIC MEDICARE CARD

Scammers are getting smarter & more believable. A new scheme combines **caller ID spoofing** with the **fake plastic Medicare card** pitch to trick older adults into sharing personal information.

HOW IT WORKS

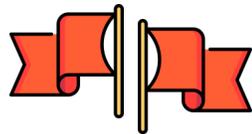
You might receive a call that *appears* to come from your doctor's office, clinic, or hospital. The caller sounds professional and claims there's an *update to your Medicare record* or that *Medicare is now issuing new plastic cards*.

They may say they are calling from the Medicare office and ask if you have received your new plastic Medicare card and ask you to confirm your Medicare number or social security number to receive your new card.

In reality, the caller is a **scammer using a fake caller ID**. Medicare is **not issuing new plastic cards**, and **neither Medicare nor your doctor** will ever call to ask for your Medicare number over the phone.

RED FLAGS

The call *appears* to come from a trusted medical office or local number.



- You're told Medicare is replacing paper cards with plastic ones.
- The caller pressures you to "verify" personal information or pay a small fee.
- You're told your benefits may stop if you don't act quickly.

PROTECT YOURSELF

- **Don't trust caller ID.** Scammers can make any number appear on your screen.
- **Hang up and call your doctor directly** using a number from a bill or their website.
- **Never share** your Medicare or Social Security number with unexpected callers.
- **Report** suspicious calls to the **NYS SMP Helpline: 800-333-4374**.



Remember: Hang up, verify, and protect your benefits.

VOLUNTEER WITH THE NYS SENIOR MEDICARE PATROL

- ✓ **Educate seniors** about Medicare fraud and scams.
- ✓ **Receive training** and ongoing support.
- ✓ **Make an impact** in your community.
- ✓ **Join a network of dedicated volunteers** working to protect Medicare and their community.



STATE WIDE
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SMP
 Senior Medicare Patrol
 Preventing Medicare Fraud

This project was supported, in part by grant number 90MPPG01701 from the U.S. Administration for Community Living, Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C. 20201.

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

THE ROSE KRYZAK LEGACY FUND

Rose Kryzak was an avid advocate and organizer whose work advanced the dignity and rights of seniors. Although she believed that one individual can make a difference, she never forgot the necessity of collective struggle, and worked tirelessly with New York StateWide Senior Action Council.

Contributions to the Rose Kryzak Legacy Fund help pay for activities not covered in our program grants including:

- Advocacy Training
- Patient Advocate Teach ins
- Analyzing Legislation
- Bill Tracker
- Grassroots Day
- ⇒ Room rental & refreshments
- ⇒ Transportation & materials

Visit our website at www.nysenior.org or use the form on page 15 to make a donation. Your tax-deductible donation provides resources for StateWide's efforts in senior advocacy across NYS.



Patient Advocates Program

PATIENT ADVOCATES PROGRAM

New York StateWide Senior Action Council offers a toll-free Patients' Rights Helpline at 1-800-333-4374, assisting patients and their families in navigating the healthcare system and protecting their rights.

Established over 40 years ago, this important program was created in response to hospital payment changes that led to faster—and sometimes premature—patient discharges intended to maximize reimbursement.

The **Patients' Rights Helpline** provides:

Personal Consultation: Guidance for callers on how to appeal hospital discharges or file complaints about the quality of care with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) or the New York State Department of Health (DoH).

Systems Monitoring: Tracking patterns in patients' rights issues to help identify needed policy and program improvements.

Consumer Education: Keeping older adults, caregivers, and professionals informed about health care quality and patient rights through monthly "Teach-In" webinars and community presentations statewide.



**UPCOMING
TEACH INS:**

DEC 23

Topic: NYS 988 System for Mental Health Assistance

Speakers: Shokri Enbawe, LCSW, Program Lead, 988 Crisis & Suicide Lifeline, NYS Office of Mental Health;

Charles Rice, Community Engagement Specialist, NYS Office of Mental Health

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2025 AWARD WINNERS

Each year at our Convention, StateWide honors exceptional seniors whose leadership has made a significant impact on the lives of older residents. Congratulations to this year's awardees:

- **Robert E. O'Donnell Award** – Mary Degon, North Country
- **Michael Burgess Award** – Nellie Gonzalez-Arce, NYC
- **Paul E. Harenberg Award** – Kathlene Lyman, Capital Region
- **Rose Kryzak Advocacy Award** – Charlie Battaglia, Central NY



Pictured L to R: Susan Schrader, Mary Degon, Helen Edelstein, Cynthia Wells



Pictured L to R: Maria Alvarez, Barb McBurnie, Kathlene Lyman, Helen Edelstein



Pictured L to R: Maria Alvarez, Amanda Vennard-Office of Comptroller DiNapoli, Nellie Gonzalez -Arce, Helen Edelstein, Stephanie Darrisaw - DC 37



Pictured L to R: Helen Edelstein, Gwen Baggs Ito - Health Foundation for Western & Central NY, Maria Alvarez, Charlie Battaglia, Jordan Bellassai - Health Foundation for Western & Central NY, Henry Moss





New Individual Members:

Valda Barnes	New York
Joy Blair	Brooklyn
Coralyn Boehler	Jamestown
Carol Bullard	Norwood
Audrey Burnett-Otley	Jamaica
Agatha Castillo	Brooklyn
Elaina Christian	Bronx
Cassie Clarke	Massena
R. Lynette Copeland	Buffalo
Trina Rose Cutugno	Brooklyn
James and Angela Falvey	Brockport
Shelagh Ford	Mechanicville
Arlene Fordock	Syracuse
Anzie Fraser	Brooklyn
Noreen George	Brooklyn
Veronica Hall	Rosedale
Shirley Hayes	Brooklyn
Lee Heller	Kingston
Cynthia Hennessy	Colton
Jimmie Jones	Brooklyn
Silvia Lavalas	Brooklyn
Jessica Luis	Syracuse
Sandra May	New York
Lynette McConnell	Brooklyn
Joseph Ndagijimana	Syracuse
Andrea and Gerald Rood	Canton
Rochelle Rogers	Huntington St.
Lorna Samuels	Brooklyn
Julie Stoil Fernandez, Esq.	Kingston
Cindy Tapper-Peralta	Albany
Olive Taylor	Brooklyn
Rosalyn Taylor	Buffalo
Kathleen Watkins	Brooklyn
Brigid Watson	Auburn

Kryzak Fund Contributors:

Isilma Alleyne	Brooklyn
Bruno and Marie Bruni	Westfield
Eileen Cassidy	Buffalo
Carolyn Crawmer	Clifton Park
Mary Degon	Malone
Mario Henry	Flushing
Patricia Herchenroder	Schenectady
Laura Jandrew	Massena
Dorothy Laffoon	Moravia
Linda Beth Lawson	Brooklyn
Kathlene Lyman	Alplaus
Henry and Mary Frances Moss	Bronx
Andrea and Gerald Rood	Canton

New Organization Members:

The Retirees Association of DC 37,
New York

Institute on Immigrant Integration
Research and Policy, Albany

New Lifetime Members:

Judith Aldrich	Gouverneur
Marlene Ashton	Piercefield
Kay DePerno	Potsdam
Deborah Hanish-Schreyer	Averill Park
Betel Manjura	Staten Island
Karen McKellar	Brooklyn
John and Diana Noviasky	Whitesboro

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

In Memory of	Honored by
Pedro and Lena Sierra	Leslie Sierra
Christina Giordano	Gail Myers
Mary Pritchard	Margaret Graham, Maria Alvarez
John Sciackitano	Maria Alvarez
In Appreciation of	Honored by
Bob Sinacore - For his outstanding service on the StateWide Board of Directors	Maria Alvarez

By joining StateWide, you can have an impact on state and federal issues of importance to older New Yorkers such as Medicare, Social Security, prescription drugs, patients' rights, long-term care, and budget issues. Your membership also provides:

- **Access to an active network of dedicated people** including local senior organizational members.
- **Representation at the State Legislature** and agencies in Albany.
- **The NY StateWide Bill Tracker** that keeps tabs on pending legislation that impacts seniors.
- Subscriptions to our newsletter **Member Update**, and our **Weekly Roundup** email with up to date information on health and consumer issues at the local, state and national levels.
- Member discounted rate for our Annual Convention featuring workshops on important senior issues and presentations from key public officials, policy experts and grassroots advocacy leaders.



**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 (if any) _____

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

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

STATE WIDE

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GIVE THE GIFT OF ADVOCACY: A STATEWIDE MEMBERSHIP FOR FAMILY OR FRIENDS

Please consider a tax-deductible membership to NY StateWide Senior Action Council for your family and friends. By supporting StateWide, you're backing a not for profit organization dedicated to empowering older New Yorkers through advocacy, education, and services. We fight for issues that matter, from safeguarding Social Security and Medicare to advancing long-term care, protecting against Medicare fraud, and influencing legislation that improves seniors' quality of life. When you give a membership, the giftee will receive a note acknowledging your thoughtful gift.



Your contribution helps ensure that our voices are heard, and our impact is felt across the state. Together, we're working to build a better future for today's seniors and tomorrow's generations. To learn more about how you can support our mission or to make a donation online, call our Helpline at **800-333-4374**, visit us at **nysenior.org**, or use the form on page 15.

Thank you for helping us continue this important work!