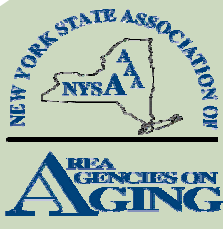




## ADVOCACY STATEMENT



### NY Connects Funding

- Restore to \$5.1 million to draw down federal funds
- Provide directly to NYSOFA

#### Why?

Leverage federal funding and save Medicaid costs

### Broadening Choices for Long Term Care

NY Connects engages over 1,600 consumers, providers and stakeholders to identify local gaps in services and other issues. The local Long Term Care Councils, together with Offices for the Aging, are developing plans and implementing strategies to address the issues.

There are 53 NY Connects programs in NYS. From its inception in 2006 through December 2010, over 500,000 New Yorkers have received information and assistance through the program.

## Save NY Connects From Elimination!

NY Connects is an essential part of the long term care system, yet the funding was eliminated in the Executive Budget as of 9/30/11. Dismantling NY Connects jeopardizes millions in current and future federal funding, and removes a critical service for families and caregivers.

### NY Connects is an Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC)

The US Administration on Aging (AoA) and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) envision Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs) as single points of entry into the long-term supports and services system for older adults and people with disabilities. In New York State, the NY Connects program, primarily led by the Offices for the Aging, serve as ADRCs. NY Connects is a locally based point of entry system that provides one stop access to objective and comprehensive information and assistance on long term care. It links individuals of all ages needing long term care to the most appropriate services and supports of their choice, regardless of payment source.

### Affordable Care Act Incentives

Under the Affordable Care Act's Balancing Incentive Payments Program (BIPP), states operating successful home and community based programs could receive an additional 2% of federal funding for non-institutional services and supports.

### New York Awarded \$8.24 Million in Grants As a Result of ADRC Status

By having an Aging and Disability Resource Center program in place (NY Connects in New York State), the state has received several grants from federal long term care reform initiatives. The chart below outlines \$8.24 million in grants received to date. States without ADRCs cannot access these funds.

Grant Program	Total Award
Community Living Program (2009): 10 counties	\$2.2 million
Veterans Directed Home and Community Based Services Program (2008): 10 counties	\$500,000 to \$1 million
Aging and Disability Resource Center Grant (2009): 2 counties	\$475,073
Chronic Disease Self Management Program (2009): Statewide	\$1,190,610
Lifespan Respite Care Program (2010): Statewide	\$188,950
Medicare Improvement for Patients and Providers Act for Beneficiary Outreach and Assistance (2010): Statewide	\$2.567 million
<i>Affordable Care Act funds</i>	
ADRC Evidenced-Based Care Transitions Program (2010): 1 county	\$214,495
<i>Affordable Care Act</i>	
ADRC Nursing Home Transition and Diversion Programs (2010): 1 region	\$399,600
<i>Affordable Care Act</i>	
<b>Estimated Total:</b>	<b>\$8.24 million</b>

### Medicaid Cost Savings

The Lewin Group's ADRC Cost Savings Calculator ([www.adrc-tae.org](http://www.adrc-tae.org)) shows that if only 2% of nursing home eligible persons in New York remain in the community (615 persons), the Medicaid cost savings in 2011 dollars is \$29 million. NY Connects plays a key role in preventing nursing home placement.

## The Purpose

The NY Connects: Choices for Long Term Care Services functions are set forth in the New York State Elder Law § 203(8):

- **Information and Assistance:** Provision of comprehensive, objective information and support for individuals and their caregivers/families about home, community based and institutional long term care services and linkage to services and resources to meet their needs.
- **Public Education:** An on-going education and awareness campaign to educate all residents about NY Connects, the long term care services in their community and to assist consumers in preparing for their long term care needs.

NY Connects programs link individuals with much needed home and community services and their family members with services and supports to prevent nursing home placement and spend-down to Medicaid. Survey results of the program showed an over 90% customer satisfaction rating of local NY Connects staff and overall benefit of program to the community.

## Long Term Care Councils

Through local Long Term Care Councils, counties are designing strategies to offer low-cost transportation and affordable and accessible housing, streamlining access to public programs, and working with institutions to improve safe transitions to the community.

## Federal Vision for ADRCs

In 2006, Congress reauthorized the Older Americans Act and included language supporting the development of ADRC efforts in every state. Serving as an ADRC, NY Connects is a key element in the redesign of term care, making the system more effective, cost efficient and sensible.

## Integration & Coordination

Through integration or coordination of existing aging and disability service systems, ADRC programs raise visibility about the full range of options that are available, provide objective information, advice, counseling and assistance, and help people more easily access public and private long term supports and services programs. This program effectively assists consumers with identifying and accessing a range of home and community based resources which maintains independence of older citizens and persons with disabilities and slows the rate of growth and expenditures in the states' Medicaid programs.

Recent research found that states with well-established home and community based service (HCBS) programs had less overall long-term care spending growth. In contrast, states with low levels of HCBS expenditures had an increase in overall costs, as their institutional costs increased.

## Affordable Care Act Incentives

The Affordable Care Act's Balancing Incentive Payments Program (BIPP) has three structural changes that states must make within six months of application: 1) a statewide no wrong door-single entry point system; 2) conflict-free case management services; and 3) core standardized assessment instruments. New York State would need to make further investments in the NY Connects program to broaden available information and ensure that individuals can obtain easy access to eligibility determinations for public programs.

Since the NY Connects program is currently functioning, the wisest investment is to support and enhance the existing program to qualify for the additional funding.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NY Connects

### A. Leverage Federal Funds

The NY Connects program is integral to maintaining low cost community based care to NY residents and also keeps the door open to Federal funds and competitive grants that require ADRCs to be in place.

### B. Long Range Vision

Through the initial planning phases and roll-out of the New York Connects program, the long range project plan was for increased state funding to be able to implement evidence based successful projects throughout the State. These are projects that have proven to maintain the health of the aging population and delay costly institutional care. Investing state funds in NY Connects yields real results by saving Medicaid costs and also positions the State to receive additional federal funding.

### C. Restore Funding to \$5.1 million

The Association strongly supports full restoration of funding for the NY Connects program, led by the New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA), in the amount of \$5.1 million.

### D. Provide Funds Directly to NYSOFA

The NY Connects funds have historically been provided to the Department of Health, then transferred to NYSOFA for payment to the counties through a voucher system. We strongly recommend that the funding be moved to the NYSOFA budget, with funds payable directly to the local NY Connects program to streamline the process.

