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Medicaid Redesign Team votes to send proposal to governor

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Foregoing a planned second day of discussion, Gov. Andrew Cuomo's Medicaid Redesign Team beat its deadline by a week and approved a slate of 79 proposals designed to save \$2.3 billion in the 2011-2012 fiscal year. The vote, coming at the end of six hours of discussion of the various proposals, took several members of the panel

by surprise, and led Assemblyman Richard Gottfried, the chair of that chamber's Health Committee, and others to abstain.

A second session had been scheduled for Friday.

"More time for the sake of more time is not something that I think is beneficial to any of us," said James Introne, Cuomo's deputy secretary for health and the director of Healthcare Redesign, just before the vote took place.

The major elements of the two-year package include a 4 percent "global cap" on the state's share of Medicaid; the state Department of Health and the Budget Division would be empowered to impose "utilization controls" and rate reductions if it appeared the cap was about to be exceeded. Also included: an expansion of "care management" that within three years would lead to almost all Medicaid recipients being entered into such a program; controls on personal care and home health costs; and reform of medical malpractice through a cap on non-economic damages and the creation of a fund for neurologically impaired infants.

The last element is sure to be controversial in the legal community, while the powers granted to the DOH and Budget by the global cap will be the subject of much discussion in the Legislature.

After the vote, the members of the Redesign Team were whisked to the second floor for an audience with the governor. A Red Room presser is reportedly imminent.

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