

# ***EMPIRE REPORT***

**Advancing the quality of care for everyone, regardless of age, income, employment, or documentation status, and eliminating the barriers that contribute to health disparities, requires investment**

**By Assembly Member Amy Paulin & Senator Julia Salazar | March 17, 2025**

For more than two decades, New York's Medicaid Quality Incentive Program has been a vital tool in the State's efforts to improving health outcomes for more than 5 million residents.

The program provides funding for a broad range of collaborative initiatives between health plans, providers and community organizations to improve health outcomes for underserved populations and tackle the underlying social, economic, and environmental factors that affect health outcomes. Sustainable funding is critical to building on these efforts, and is especially important in the face of Federal efforts to drastically cut Medicaid funding.

The Quality Incentive Program has a proven track record of improving the quality of care for the Medicaid population and ensuring equitable access to care for all New Yorkers. For example, it has helped to fund screening programs for high-risk pregnant women in Brooklyn, to help ensure they have access to health services and social supports to improve maternal and infant health outcomes. It has also been utilized to provide primary health care services to disadvantaged individuals and families in the Bronx and surrounding communities and has helped to improve compliance for patients with diabetes.

Both Governor Hochul's Executive Budget proposal and our chambers' one-house budgets provide approximately \$50 million for the Quality Incentive Program. New York has been a national leader in delivering high-quality care to its Medicaid beneficiaries, but gaps in access to and equity of care continue to present challenges — especially in our marginalized communities. Funding for the Quality Incentive Program has been a vital lifeline to communities across the state, and it is critical that New York continues to support ongoing efforts to eliminate disparities and deliver high-quality, equitable care to populations in need.

We have also authored a bill (A.2044/S.6266) which would codify the State's Quality Incentive Program, instead of having it funded annually in the budget, as it is imperative that it is consistently funded.

We are facing potentially massive Federal cuts to Medicaid. Moreover, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services recently announced that they would roll back funding for health-related social needs programs. Medicaid and health care equity are under attack and New York must fight back.

To continue to ensure that high-quality, equitable care is accessible to everyone, it's vital that state leaders fully fund the Quality Incentive Program.

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