



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael F. Nozzolio

Senator Nozzolio Sponsors Legislation to Relieve Counties of Medicaid Mandate

MICHAEL F. NOZZOLIO October 14, 2011

New York State Senator Mike Nozzolio has announced that he is co-sponsoring landmark mandate relief legislation (S.5889) that would remove the burden of Medicaid costs from county governments and save property taxpayers billions of dollars every year.

“In order to turn our State around, encourage private sector job growth and provide much-needed relief for our taxpayers, it is critically important to eliminate unfunded State mandates that drive up local costs. New York has the most expensive Medicaid program in the Nation and Medicaid costs are by far the largest unfunded mandate placing a burden on County budgets,” said Senator Nozzolio. “This legislation will provide immediate relief to property taxpayers and give local governments greater control of their own costs.”

The legislation would immediately freeze the rate local governments pay for Medicaid, effective January 1, 2012. On October 1, 2012, counties’ contributions would be decreased by five percent, with local contributions annually reduced until the State entirely funds Medicaid services by 2019. The measure has received bipartisan support and has been endorsed by the New York State Association of Counties.

Senator Nozzolio and his Senate colleagues previously fought to have the State remove the mandated expense of the Family Health Plus program from counties, and capped counties’ annual Medicaid increases to 3 percent, saving local taxpayers millions of dollars.

“These reforms significantly helped local taxpayers. Having the State take full control of Medicaid will build on this success and encourage additional cost-saving reforms to the program,” said Senator Nozzolio.

As a member of the Legislative Task Force on Medicaid Reform, Senator Nozzolio has consistently supported measures to aggressively fight fraud, restore accountability and address the structural spending crisis in the Medicaid system. This year, he worked with Governor Cuomo and his Senate colleagues to adopt a State budget that reduces Medicaid spending by \$2.8 billion, puts a cap on future Medicaid expenditures and takes the first

steps to create a program that taxpayers can afford.

In addition, Senator Nozzolio is co-sponsoring legislation that has been adopted in the State Senate that would greatly assist in the recovery of lost Medicaid funds and save the State time and resources by allowing local district attorneys to prosecute Medicaid provider fraud. This legislation will empower Counties to recover more tax dollars that are lost to Medicaid fraud and waste, and keep more of this savings to offset local costs.

Senator Nozzolio is also co-sponsoring legislation to require individuals who apply for any form of public assistance to first pass a drug test and is fighting to restore provisions in the law that required face-to-face interviews for Medicaid recipients, fingerprinting and testing to determine eligibility for the program. These Medicaid anti-fraud protection measures were eliminated in the 2009 State Budget by New York City legislators who at the time had complete control of New York State government.

“These safeguards need to be reinstated immediately so that we can reduce State spending and provide relief and economic opportunities to our taxpayers. It is critical that we implement a cost-effective and efficient method of delivering Medicaid services to individuals who are most in need, while also lessening the burden on the taxpayer,” said Senator Nozzolio.