



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

O'Mara sponsors legislation to combat Medicaid fraud, cut waste of taxpayer dollars

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Albany, N.Y., April 25—On the same day that a Congressional panel is turning the federal spotlight on Medicaid fraud nationally, New York State State Senator Tom O'Mara (R-C, Big Flats) announced today that he is sponsoring legislation (S.4614) in the Senate to reimburse counties for the cost of purchasing locally developed, cutting-edge computer software that could help pinpoint cases of fraud and other abuses within New York's Medicaid system and potentially save state and local taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars.

"Putting a stop to Medicaid fraud, scams and other rip-offs has to be a priority at every level of government. It's costing state taxpayers and taxpayers across the nation billions upon billions of dollars," said O'Mara, noting that the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee is convening a hearing in Washington, D.C. this morning titled, ["Is Government Adequately Protecting Taxpayers from Medicaid Fraud?"](#)

Closer to home, O'Mara said that while the new state budget calls for beginning a state takeover of future growth in local Medicaid costs in 2013, state and local efforts have to be ongoing to prevent abuses and root out fraud.

"Governor Cuomo has zeroed in on the need to control Medicaid spending as the number one way to address New York's highest-in-the-nation tax burden. This year's state budget took important steps, but we need to keep acting aggressively

against fraud and other abuses,” said O’Mara. “State and local taxpayers deserve a ‘zero tolerance’ policy to combat the millions upon millions, if not billions of taxpayer dollars lost to Medicaid fraud and abuse. One of the most effective ways to prevent fraud is to put in place the necessary tools, including cutting-edge technology, to identify it and take steps to stop it. It would be a wise investment and could ultimately prove enormously cost-effective for the state to encourage its use.”

O’Mara has strongly supported cutting-edge, data mining computer software like that developed by the [Horseheads-based Salient Corporation](#). Salient has developed and continued to fine-tune a computer software package, already successfully used by Chemung and nearly a dozen other counties statewide, as well as the state Office of the Medicaid Inspector General (OMIG), that numerous officials believe could point the way to hundreds of millions and potentially billions of dollars in Medicaid fraud and waste prevention at the state level. [[Read more from WETM-TV](#)]

O’Mara highlighted a *USA Today* analysis last year that showed New York with the nation’s most expensive Medicaid program. The analysis revealed that New York spent \$2,903 per person on Medicaid in 2010, or one-third more than any other state. The national average was \$1,364.

Prior to his election to the Senate in 2010, O’Mara served as a state assemblyman for three consecutive terms and chaired the Assembly Republican Task Force on Medicaid Waste, Fraud and Abuse. The task force examined strategies to combat what some fiscal watchdogs have said could potentially be billions of taxpayer dollars being lost to abuse, fraud, and waste in New York’s \$50-billion-plus Medicaid system.

“We need to stay focused on putting a stop to the overutilization, mismanagement and, regrettably, scams and rip-offs that continue to plague New York’s system of Medicaid. That needs to remain a fundamental priority,” O’Mara said.