



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James L. Seward

CARE Act Passes Senate

JAMES L. SEWARD April 21, 2015

| ISSUE: **AGING, FAMILIES, HEALTH, HEALTH CARE**

ALBANY, 04/21/15 – The New York State Senate today passed the “Caregiver Advise, Record, Enable (CARE) Act” to educate and support the individuals who provide vital healthcare to loved ones.

The legislation ([S.676](#)), co-sponsored by Senator James L. Seward (R/C/I-Oneonta) would update New York’s Public Health Law and require hospitals to provide, at a patient’s request, discharge instructions and post-release care plans to a designated caregiver.

“When an individual leaves the hospital, there are a number of steps to recovery, and quite often a loved one, without formal medical training, is called upon to help make sure that recovery goes well,” said Senator Seward. **“This new law will provide some help to the 4.1 million New Yorkers who serve as caregivers each year by making certain they have the tools necessary to provide for their loved ones.”**

Despite the vast importance of caregivers in the individual's day-to-day care, many caregivers find that they are often left out of discussions involving a patient's care while in the hospital and, upon the patient's discharge, receive little to no instruction in the tasks they are expected to perform.

The Caregiver Advise, Record, and Enable (CARE) Act would help address these challenges by having caregivers and hospitals work together in the development of a care plan. Upon

admission to a hospital, a patient would be able to designate a caregiver in the patient's medical record. Prior to the patient's discharge to their residence or transfer to another facility, the hospital would need to notify and offer to meet with the designated caregiver to discuss the patient's plan of care and offer to adequately train the designated caregiver in certain aftercare tasks.

“When it comes to shopping, eating and other routine activities, most of us are qualified to help. However, when administering multiple medications, changing bandages, and operating medical equipment become part of the care routine, some additional training is often necessary,” Seward added.

This approach would not only improve the quality of care provided to patients once they leave a hospital setting, but it would help reduce an estimated \$17 billion in Medicare funds spent each year nationally on hospital readmissions that would not be needed if patients get the right care.

The legislation is supported by several groups including the Alzheimer’s Association, Association on Aging in New York, AARP, Center for Independence of the Disabled, Center for Medical Consumers, Empire State Consumer Project, Lifespan, and NY StateWide Senior Action Council.

“The CARE Act will ensure a better level of care for those in need, and will save time and money by avoiding costly hospital readmissions. This model will help patients return home and stay in their own community,” Seward concluded.

Companion legislation(A.1323) has also been introduced in the assembly.