



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

Release: Legislation Co-Sponsored by Addabbo to Aid Unpaid Family Caregivers and Patients Passes Senate and Assembly

JOSEPH P. ADDABBO JR. June 22, 2015

Queens, NY (June 22, 2015) In an effort to provide enhanced services for elderly New York residents and others who need assistance at home after leaving health care facilities, NYS Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr. recently voted to approve legislation (S.676) he co-sponsors to provide greater information and assistance to unpaid family, friends and neighbors who step in to lend a helping hand to discharged patients. The bill has now been approved by both the Senate and Assembly, and will be sent to the Governor for his consideration.

“At any given time in New York State, there are 4.1 million New Yorkers who are providing unpaid care for family members, friends and other loved ones who have been released from the hospital and need after-care services,” said Addabbo. “This care can include helping their loved ones to dress, cooking for them, cleaning their homes, administering medications and undertaking other vital tasks. By some estimates, the value of this unpaid care tops \$32 billion a year.”

However, Addabbo said, there are times when caregivers are not provided with adequate medical and other information about the services they will need to provide to their loved ones, and they are often not consulted when hospital discharge plans are being designed to meet the patient’s after-care needs.

“This legislation – known as the Caregiver Advise, Record, and Enable Act, or the CARE Act – has been developed to ensure that family members, neighbors, or friends who tend to the needs of loved ones discharged from the hospital are provided with all of the information they require to provide proper care,” said Addabbo. “Ensuring that patients receive the appropriate care is not only vital on a basic human level, but could very well decrease hospital readmissions and provide savings for our overall health care system.” He noted that the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid estimate that \$17 billion is expended annually on unnecessary hospital readmissions.

Under the legislation, hospitals would be required to offer patients the opportunity to identify a personal caregiver – whether a family member, friend, or close neighbor – to help them when they are discharged. The caregiver would be identified by the patient within 24 hours of admittance, or in cases where the patient enters the facility in an unconscious state, when consciousness is regained. The chosen caregiver would be consulted about the patient’s discharge plan, be provided with detailed information about after-care needs, and receive contact information for outside groups who might assist with necessary care.

“As our population continues to age, there is a growing need for informal, unpaid caregivers in our state and across our nation,” said Addabbo. “This legislation would help to ensure effective and appropriate personal and medical services for those in need, and offer critical information and involvement for those providing care for their friends and family. Whether a patient just needs short-term assistance to bounce back from a relatively minor health issue, or more long-term and intensive aid, the CARE Act will make a big positive difference in their recovery.”

On a related note, Addabbo is also the primary sponsor of paid family leave legislation (S.3004) which would provide compensated time off from work for New Yorkers who need to care for a new child or ailing family member. “Many men and women throughout the state

are devoting many hours of their time to caring for new babies, or sick spouses or parents,” he said. “Both the CARE Act and my paid family leave proposal would provide important supports for patients, their families and their dedicated caregivers.”