



ARGENTUM
EXPANDING SENIOR LIVING

NEW YORK

Written Testimony, Argentum NY

Ginger Lynch Landy, Co- Executive Director

Michele O'Connor, Co- Executive Director

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On behalf of Argentum NY, the New York State Chapter of Argentum, we thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on provisions in the FY 2023-24 Executive Budget proposal impacting the long-term care sector.

Argentum NY represents 74 professionally managed assisted living communities, serving over 7,500 seniors across New York State. Our members are dedicated to providing the highest quality care and services to residents, promoting their independence, choices, dignity and quality of life.

Adult care facilities (ACFs) and assisted living residences (ALRs) provide care and services in a home-like environment to New York's seniors wishing to age in place, close to family and friends. The average resident is 85 years of age, has multiple co-morbidities, and needs assistance with several activities of daily living. ACFs and ALRs provide a less costly alternative to nursing home settings and the demand for these types of providers continues to increase as our population continues to age. It is critical for the State to ensure options for seniors remains robust.

Argentum NY applauds the State's recognition of the importance of the long-term care sector and supports many of the provisions contained in the Executive Budget proposal related to these providers.

Assisted Living Residence Quality Reporting Requirements: (Modify to require stakeholder input and extend reporting time frame):

Argentum NY fully supports the intent of the provision in the Executive Budget proposal to develop quality measures for assisted living residences (ALRs), enhanced assisted living residences (EALRs) which provide aging in place services, and special needs assisted living residences (SNALRs) which provide memory care to residents with Alzheimer's Disease and other cognitive impairments. The proposal would also require the posting of certain information including monthly service rates, fees, staffing information, and approved residency agreements. Additionally, DOH would be authorized to report on these quality measures on its website beginning January 2024.

However, given the vast variation among ACF and ALR providers in their operations, licensure, the services offered and resident acuity, all of which directly impacts staffing levels, developing quality measures is a task requiring careful thought and input from the industry.

To illustrate, some ALRs may care for a high acuity population, such as those with EALR certification, while others may serve seniors who are more independent and in need of less care and services such as a basic ALR; some provide special needs services, such as memory care, (SNALR) with or without enhanced services; and others serve the Medicaid (ALP) and lower income population. It will be critical to develop quality measures that are flexible enough to accurately reflect the different licensure categories, staffing levels, and pricing structures.

Additionally, it will be necessary to develop meaningful data collection tools that can then be reported to the public in an easy-to-understand format.

There are currently two State work groups that are appropriate to examine quality measures for senior living providers: **The Re-Imagining Long Term Care Task Force; and the NYS Master Plan for Aging's Association Resource Group**. While neither group has convened to date, we are looking forward to engaging in these discussions.

We urge the Legislature to **modify this proposal to require input from stakeholders and extend the reporting effective date to ensure a thorough examination of the issues and provision of meaningful recommendations.**

Argentum NY also supports several other measures in the Executive Budget proposal, including:

Pilot Program - Certified Medication Aides in NH: (Modify to include EALRs)

Argentum NY supports the proposal to allow certified medication aides to administer routine and pre-filled medications in nursing homes, under the supervision of a registered nurse. **We urge the Legislature to modify this proposal to include EALR settings as well.** EALRs employ nurses who are authorized to administer medications, and therefore have the required supervisory role established.

Registration of Nurse Staffing Agencies: (Support)

During the course of the pandemic, the staffing crisis in the long-term care sector came to the forefront. While nurse staffing agencies were able to help address some staffing shortages, they charged exorbitant fees to supply staff to communities. This proposal will address many of the issues providers face when needing to utilize nurse staffing agencies.

Nurse Licensure Compact: (Support)

Argentum NY supports the inclusion of New York in the Nurse Licensure Compact. Allowing nurses licensed in other states to practice in New York will also aid in addressing nurse staffing shortages.

Advanced Home Health Aide Extension: (Support)

Argentum NY welcomes the extension of the Advanced Home Health Aide category of home health aides through 2029. This will provide additional time to advance the program and provide a career ladder for HHAs.

Conclusion:

Argentum NY appreciates the Legislature's commitment to ensuring seniors' access to vital long-term care supports and services and looks forward to engaging in discussions on these proposals as we work together to advance long-term care policy in New York State.