



Heritage Ministries

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Vinecroft Retirement Community

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Rolling Fields Elder Care Community

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Governor Kathy Hochul,

On behalf of the non-profit organization Heritage Ministries, the dedicated nursing staff, and the residents they serve in New York State's nursing homes, I urge you to recognize the needs of our state's seniors and agree to the 10.5% Medicaid reimbursement increase and Medicaid rebasing process proposed by the Legislature. This increase is not optional. It is a necessity for nursing homes across the state to continue to operate with a high quality of care, appropriate staffing levels, and provide the wages that staff deserve for their work.

As a community member who understands the importance of nursing homes in our healthcare system, I deeply appreciate the investments proposed by the Senate and the Assembly in their recent budget bills. The 10.5% increase is a critical first step to enable nursing homes to attract dedicated staff, offer competitive wages, and continue to provide high-quality care for their residents. At a minimum, this investment, the restoration of your proposed cuts, and "rebasement" (updating) legislation must be included in the final budget.

The driving force behind the work at Heritage is to provide aging individuals, and those facing complex medical conditions and disabilities, with the highest quality of life and quality of care possible. However, today there is an \$810 million (State-share) Medicaid funding gap for the nursing home care provided in New York. The funding gap makes it a challenge to retain high quality staff and fulfill their mission, and it is threatening the survival of many high-quality nursing homes like Heritage Ministries.

Right now, 82% of non-profit homes are losing money on operations. The State's Medicaid program is defaulting on its promise to nursing home residents by failing to provide reimbursement that matches the costs of care. The underfunding impacts caregiver wages, the ability to recruit and retain staff, exacerbates direct care staff burn out, and impacts all 97,000 nursing home residents in the state, whether they themselves rely on Medicaid or not. Further, it is reducing access to quality long-term care for individuals in the community seeking services.

For Heritage Ministries to sustainably offer more competitive wages and continue providing the high-quality care their residents deserve, the State needs to ensure that we have a nursing home Medicaid reimbursement rate that matches and keeps pace with the cost of providing care and compensating staff.

Please protect our nursing home residents and others seeking quality long-term care, by approving a 10.5% nursing home Medicaid rate increase and committing to update nursing home Medicaid reimbursement rates at least every 5 years! I urge you to ensure these actions are included in the final budget agreement for fiscal year 2024-25.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue.

Sincerely,