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Res. No. 796

Resolution calling on the New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, S.4334 and a companion bill in the Assembly, to amend the elder law, in relation to establishing a senior dental services grant program

By Council Members Williams, Lee, Cabán and Banks

Whereas, New York City's population of older adults aged 65 years or older is growing rapidly, reaching 1.43 million in 2023, and is projected to increase 40% by 2040; and

Whereas, Most older New Yorkers live on a fixed income and rely on Social Security, pensions, or retirement savings, which can make it difficult to keep up with the rising cost of living in New York City; and

Whereas, To offset the cost of medical expenses, most older New Yorkers also receive health coverage from Medicare, Medicaid, or other managed care providers; and

Whereas, Although New York State ("NYS" or "State") Medicaid provides dental coverage through managed care plans and a fee-for-service option, the cost of necessary dental procedures can still be too high for some older New Yorkers; and

Whereas, For example, the scope of Medicaid's coverage might not include all necessary procedures, especially more complex treatments such as implants or extensive restorative work, and copays or deductibles associated with dental services can be a financial burden; and

Whereas, Not-for-profit organizations, like the Community Healthcare Network, and dental schools, like Columbia College of Dental Medicine and the NYU College of Dentistry, offer free or reduced cost dental care in an effort to fill the service gap, which is done so at the providers' expense; and

Whereas, Oral health is crucial to overall health because poor dental hygiene can lead to issues like

tooth decay and gum disease, which can significantly impact an individual's ability to chew and eat properly, potentially causing malnutrition by preventing one from consuming a balanced diet; and

Whereas, Studies have shown that poor oral health status can also impair an older adult's self-esteem and social interactions, which, in turn, can have a negative effect on their health status and well-being; and

Whereas, State Senate bill S.4334, sponsored by NYS Senator Leroy Comrie, would establish a grant program for the provision of dental services exclusively for older adults in need of assistance; and

Whereas, This bill seeks to compensate those who have been able to provide dental care and support their efforts going forward; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls on New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, S.4334 and a companion bill in the Assembly, to amend the elder law, in relation to establishing a senior dental services grant program.

LS #18610
3/4/2025
CGR