



**Department  
of Health**

# **Priorities & Possibilities**

**James McDonald, MD, MPH**

**Commissioner**

**JUNE 20, 2024 • CEREBRAL PALSY STATE'S 6TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON MULTI-DISCIPLINARY CLINICAL CARE FOR PATIENTS WITH INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES**

# Definition of Health

"Health is a state of optimal physical, mental and social well-being."

**\$237 BILLION**

New York State FY2025 Budget

**\$101 BILLION**

NYSDOH's FY2025 Budget

**\$83 BILLION**

Medicaid

**\$13 BILLION**

Essential Plan

# Mission, Vision and Values



## Mission

To protect and promote health and well-being for all, building on a foundation of health equity.

## Vision

New York is a healthy community of thriving individual and families.

## Values

Public Good • Integrity • Innovation • Collaboration • Excellence • Respect • Inclusion

## Health

Health is a state of optimal physical, mental and social well-being.

## Statement on Health Equity

Health equity is foundational to everything we do to help all people achieve optimal physical, mental and social well-being. Everyone at the Department of Health shares responsibility for achieving health equity and eliminating health disparities.

## **Health Equity:**

*Shall mean the highest level of health for all people and shall entail focused efforts to address avoidable inequalities by equalizing those conditions for health for those that have experienced injustices, socioeconomic disadvantages, and systemic disadvantages.*

**New York Public Health Law – Article 2F**

"Intentional...not everyone has the same starting point or the same advantages, yet everyone deserves a fair and just opportunity for the best health outcomes..."

# Equality doesn't mean Equity



# Everyone benefits when we achieve health equity

1. Medicaid/Essential Plan
2. WIC
3. Drug user health hubs

## **Social Determinants of Health:**

*Shall mean life-enhancing resources, such as availability of healthful foods, quality housing, economic opportunity, social relationships, transportation, education, and health care, whose distribution across populations effectively determines the length and quality of life.*

New York Public Health Law – Article 2F

"We can all have the same advantages"

# What are Social Determinants of Health?



"We can all have the same advantages"

## **Health Disparities:**

*Shall mean measurable differences in health status, access to care, and quality of care as determined by race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, a preferred language other than English, gender expression, disability status, aging population, immigration status, and socioeconomic status.*

New York Public Health Law – Article 2F

"It's about outcomes"

# Some current public health challenges and opportunities...

## *These Doctors Admit They Don't Want Patients With Disabilities*

When granted anonymity in focus groups, physicians let their guards down and shared opinions consistent with experiences of many people with disabilities.

- In October, 2022 the New York Times published an article about Dr. Lisa Iezzoni's groundbreaking research highlighting barriers to healthcare for people with physical disabilities
- Dr. Iezzoni found that, when allowed to speak anonymously, doctors admitted to not wanting to treat patients with physical disabilities for a number of reasons including medical complexity, time constraints, physical plant limitations, as well as bias



"Dr. Lagu said...one change she would like to see, which the National Council on Disability proposed this year, is including disability in the data health care systems collect about their patients. Not doing so makes it impossible to track disparities in treatment and outcomes."



# The Department has recently created the framework to identify People with Physical Disabilities (PWPD) in Medicaid's data warehouse

## Diagnosis

A list of neurological and congenital diagnoses was drafted by disability rights advocates and edited and validated by Office of Health Insurance Programs (OHIP) Medical Directors. To be counted as People with Physical Disabilities (PWPD), the member must have at least one diagnosis on the list.

## Durable Medical Equipment (DME)

A list was drafted by Office of Health Insurance Programs (OHIP) Durable Medical Equipment and Supplies Team and validated by OHIP Medical Directors. To be considered People with Physical Disabilities (PWPD), a member must have at least one diagnosis on the list *and* a claim for at least one item of DME in the last seven years.

~ 210,000 Medicaid enrollees in New York State have been identified as living with a chronic/permanent physical disability

Initial data shows that People with Physical Disabilities (PWPD) have higher rates of Emergency Department use, preventable hospitalizations, disease burden and costs than the statewide average

# Health Disparities for People with Physical Disabilities (PWPD)

Women with physical disabilities have the same incidence rate for breast cancer as women without disabilities, but because of later diagnosis and/or less aggressive treatment, they are one-third more likely to die from breast cancer.

*This represents a failure of the healthcare system*

## Drivers

- Lack of physical accessibility
- Lack of assistive technology or accommodations
- Lack of access to safe, accessible transportation
- Lack of expertise
- Stigma/Bias
- Failures in cultural competency

# Initiatives

## 2025 Budget Initiative

- This year DOH got a budget initiative passed which reimburses Article 28 providers at 150% for all services provided to individuals with physical disabilities
- This budget initiative goes into effect October 1, 2024
- The hope is that higher reimbursements will combat some of the negative attitudes and practices outlined by Dr. Iezzoni

## Intensive Stakeholder Engagement

- DOH will convene stakeholder roundtables throughout Fiscal Year 2025 to discuss:
  - Streamlining Medicaid wheelchair repairs
  - Durable Medical Equipment Medicaid Policies
  - Medicaid Provider Accessibility and Competency
- Stakeholders will include people with lived experience

# Essential Plan

## 1332 State Innovation Waiver

- \$13 Billion annual program moved to State Innovation Waiver authority
- Income eligibility limit raised to 250% of federal poverty line effective April 1, 2024
- Someone earning \$37,650 could obtain affordable coverage with no premium
- Helps additional 100,000 New Yorkers
- Subsidies to consumers 400% of federal poverty line for those in Qualified Health Plans, effective January 1, 2025

# 1115 Waiver

## **\$7.5 Billion Agreement: \$6 Billion in Federal Funding over three years**

- Supports Medicaid hospital global budget initiative
- Improves health equity and reduces health disparities
- Establishes Social Care Networks
- Creates Loan Repayment Program for Healthcare Professionals
- Establishes Career Pathways Training Programs
- Invests in behavioral and social care services, nutritional and housing support



# Social Care Networks (\$3.4B Services; \$500M Infrastructure)

## Targeted High-Need Populations Eligible for Enhanced HRSN Services

- Medicaid High Utilizers, including those experiencing homelessness
- Individuals with serious chronic conditions (e.g., two or more chronic conditions, HIV/AIDS) and enrolled in a Health Home
- Individuals with Substance Use Disorder, Serious Mental Illness, or Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
- Pregnant persons, up to 12 months postpartum
- Children aged 0-6
- Children under 18 with chronic conditions
- Foster care youth, juvenile justice-involved, and those under kinship care
- Post-release criminal justice-involved individuals with serious chronic conditions



**Housing  
Supports**



**Nutrition**



**Health-Related  
Social Needs  
Transportation**



**Health-Related  
Social Needs Case  
Management**

# Investing in Children's Health



## **1115 Amendment: Continuous Eligibility for Children Ages Zero to Six**

In Spring 2024, New York State will submit a new 1115 amendment to request that children can remain continuously enrolled in Medicaid and Child Health Plus up to age six. Expected to be effective 1/1/2025.

This will eliminate an administrative burden for an estimated 635,000 children already enrolled and prevent 30,000 children from having gaps in coverage.



# Strengthen the Workforce (\$694M)

The New York Health Equity Reform (NYHER) amendment will invest in workforce initiatives to support advancing health equity and addressing high demand workforce shortages to improve access to and quality of services.



Career Pathways Training Programs (\$646M)



Workforce Investment Organizations (WIOs)



Student Loan Repayment (\$48M)

# Workforce Challenges

## It's all Interconnected

- How are we different than other states?  
**Are we playing soccer uphill?**
- 49 states allow a medical assistant to administer a vaccine
- How we look at Physician Assistants
- How we look at Anesthesia services
- How we approach oral health: dental hygienists, dental assistants
- How we approach license compacts
- Medication aids in nursing homes
- Malpractice in New York...

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# New York *Public Health Now* Podcast

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