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Kate Colburn Leads Hospice Charge at Press Conference Local Politicians and Experts Weigh in on Proposed Medicare Cuts



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Hospice care, which provides compassionate end-of-life care to patients and their families, has been shown to be a cost-effective use of Medicare funds that provides necessary benefits to patients and their families. Under current law, hospice care for patients is covered by Medicare. Among the services currently reimbursed by Medicare are doctor's services, nursing care, licensed social workers, medical equipment and supplies, medications, home health aides, and other related support services. A press conference took place at St. John's Riverside Hospital, Yonkers, on May 12 to address proposed rules to cut funds to New York State health care providers, including Medicare cuts to hospice and Medicaid cuts to hospitals.

White Plains, NY (PRWEB) May 21, 2008 -- Hospice care, which provides compassionate end-of-life care to patients and their families, has been shown to be a cost-effective use of Medicare funds that provides necessary benefits to patients and their families.

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Kate Colburn, MA, Executive Director of Hospice & Palliative Care of Westchester addressed the audience regarding adverse affects of cuts to hospice funding. Jim Foy, president of St. John's Riverside Hospital; [Congresswoman Nita Lowey](#); Ken Raske, president of the Greater New York Hospital Association; and [Joseph O'Brien](#), Director of Public Affairs for Congressman Eliot L. Engel, addressed the Medicaid cuts.

"The proposed rules will cut more than \$11 million in services from hospices in New York State. They will also cut more than \$1 million from the five hospices in Westchester and more than \$300,000 from my program. These cuts will drastically affect hospice programs which take care of anyone with any life-limiting diagnosis regardless of their ability to pay," Colburn said.

"The purpose of the cuts is to curtail Medicare spending on hospice care by over \$2 billion

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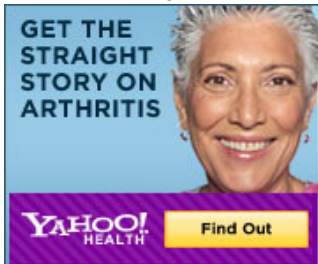


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over the next three years. That is \$2 billion out of a program whose spending level in 2006 is estimated to be \$11 billion," Colburn added.

The Bush Administration's proposed regulatory changes could "cost hospitals in Westchester \$28 million in the first year," said Jim Foy, president of St. John's Riverside Hospital.

"We are advocating that a supplemental spending bill moving through Congress includes a moratorium on these proposed regulations, several of which are scheduled to take effect on May 25. If passed, New York's hospitals and health systems could lose \$7.4 billion over five years starting on May 25," said [Congresswoman Lowey](#).

"Unfortunately, the health care system, particularly in New York, is facing unprecedented challenges that if unaddressed can threaten the long-term stability of an already fragile system and limit the access and affordability to medical care that every American deserves," Lowey added.

According to the New York State Dept. of Transportation, the number of senior residents in Westchester will increase to 191,000 in 2010. By 2020, it will grow by 37% to 231,000. By then, "we will have to produce 30% more positions in the health care arena. We have to invest now," said Ken Raske, president of the Greater New York Hospital Association.

In remarks delivered for him, [Congressman Engel](#) said that we must work hard "to protect our communities from irrevocable harm."

Hospice & Palliative Care of Westchester is located at [95 South Broadway, 4th Floor, White Plains, NY](#). For additional information, visit www.hospiceofwestchester.com or call 914.682.1484.

About Hospice & Palliative Care of Westchester: Hospice & Palliative Care of Westchester is a private, not-for-profit agency that provides comprehensive health care services to people with advanced illnesses who live in [Westchester County](#). Hospice & Palliative Care of Westchester offers programs and care that are intended to promote patient quality of life by addressing the medical, physical, emotional and spiritual needs of patients and their families.

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Hospice & Palliative Care of Westchester

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