



# Healthcare Policy Roundup

August 29, 2018

## Catch the Highlights!

- *New bill allocates funding to law enforcement drug intervention program*
- *City announces new “baby café” and breastfeeding policy toolkit for businesses*
- *Cuomo signs emergency order reinstating school zone speeding cameras in NYC*

## Questions? Comments?

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## New bill expands funding for LEAD program:

A portion of funding from seized and forfeited properties will now be allocated towards state Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) programs under a new law signed by Governor Andrew Cuomo last week. LEAD programs use a harm reduction approach to divert individuals arrested for low-level drug possession and trafficking crimes into addiction treatment programs.

Under the LEAD model, law enforcement officers collaborate with prosecutors, defense attorneys, substance use disorder (SUD) counselors, social service providers, and housing assistance programs to offer rehabilitation services to drug users who are better served outside the criminal justice system. The program model was originally piloted in Seattle and adopted in Albany in 2016. Since that time, other New York municipalities – including Brooklyn – have developed or are exploring similar programs.

Under the legislation, many of these programs have struggled to secure sustainable funding, despite occasional grant support. In addition to allocating resources to law enforcement agencies, the new bill will also funnel a portion of funding from the State Chemical Dependence Fund to the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) to further support state LEAD programs. According to Governor Cuomo: “We must use every tool at our disposal to combat this nation’s opioid epidemic and the underlying issues that lead people to crime.”

## City launches new breastfeeding initiative in Brownsville:

Last week, the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH)’s Center for Health Equity announced the opening of a new “baby café” at the Brownsville Neighborhood Action Center. Baby cafés connect pregnant and breastfeeding mothers to lactation consultants and other breastfeeding parents in their local neighborhoods. The new Brownsville café is among several breastfeeding-friendly locations throughout New York City and hundreds of other locations throughout the country.



As part of this announcement, the Center for Health Equity also introduced a toolkit that will provide local businesses with information on New York State breastfeeding laws and a “Breastfeeding Welcome Here” decal for storefront windows. The announcement concluded with the recognition of thirteen local businesses in Central Brooklyn that promote and encourage public breastfeeding practices.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), breastfeeding provides unparalleled health benefits for both mother and child. Mothers who breastfeed are less likely to develop hypertension, type 2 diabetes, and certain cancers. Similarly, children who are breastfed are at reduced risk for conditions such as asthma, obesity, gastrointestinal issues, and respiratory infections.

## Cuomo temporarily reinstates school zone speed camera law in NYC:

Earlier this week, Governor Andrew Cuomo signed an executive order reinstating the use of speed cameras outside New York City school zones after the state Senate adjourned for the year without passing a bill that would renew the statewide policy. The emergency order will go into effect on September 4th –one day before the beginning of the 2018-2019 school year. The order will affect 140 school zones throughout New York City.

The emergency order will give city officials access to New York State Department of Motor Vehicles data, allowing officials to identify owners of speeding vehicles in city school zones. While Cuomo may reauthorize the emergency order every 30 days, the Governor has indicated hope that the state Senate will reconvene before January 2019 to pass a statewide bill. Meanwhile, City Council is working with Mayor Bill de Blasio to pass city-level legislation mirroring the state’s lapsed policy.

According to Governor Cuomo, accidents and fatalities in school zones throughout the state decreased by 55% since the policy was first enacted in 2013. In New York City, the Department of Transportation recorded a nearly 63% drop in school zone fatalities since that time. In a recent statement, Governor Cuomo warned: “If we do not put the speed cameras back in an operational capacity, I think it is inarguable that there is a high probability that we will have the loss of human life.”