



Healthcare Policy Roundup

August 7, 2018

Catch the Highlights!

- *Cuomo announces multi-phase “Able New York” agenda for individuals with disabilities*
- *Cuomo launches campaign aimed at connecting New Yorkers to comprehensive family planning services*
- *FDA expands quality metrics for medication-assisted treatment*

Questions? Comments?

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State launches initiative for individuals with disabilities:

Governor Andrew Cuomo celebrated the 28th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) with the launch of the “Able New York” agenda – an initiative aimed at increasing access to state-sponsored services for individuals with disabilities throughout New York State. The Governor has been a target of broad criticism for his failure to provide adequate resources for people with disabilities, especially people with developmental disabilities.

The New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) will lead the first phase of the initiative with a series of policies aimed at supporting opportunities for community living. These include guidance on existing policies around patient choice and autonomy and legislation that requires nursing facilities to educate patients about community living options. As part of this rule, NYSDOH will require nursing facilities undergoing a Certificate of Need review to submit an assessment of home and community-based services (HBCS) in their service area.

While some critics are concerned that the program wrongly incentivizes early discharge into the community, others have lauded the Governor’s efforts to ensure integration and accessibility for disabled communities. According to Lindsay Miller, Executive Director of the New York Association on Independent Living: “Access and integration, which are legally protected rights, remain a goal rather than a reality for many people with disabilities...we look forward to partnering with the Governor to implement these important administrative initiatives.”

Cuomo launches reproductive health awareness campaign:

Amid federal attempts to limit family planning options for individuals throughout the United States, Governor Cuomo has launched a public awareness campaign aimed at connecting New Yorkers to comprehensive reproductive health services. The campaign responds to a growing movement in Crisis Pregnancy Centers, which use medically-inaccurate information to counsel women against abortion.

The campaign will leverage subway ads and print media to connect New Yorkers to online resources offering medically-accurate information about pregnancy, contraception, and abortion. An online website will also include tips on what to look for in a reproductive health center and a list of providers that offer comprehensive reproductive health services regardless of documentation status or ability to pay. The information will be available in multiple languages.



The campaign is part of a concerted effort to secure reproductive health access throughout New York State amid proposed changes to the federal Title X program—a grant that funds family planning services throughout the country. Last month, Governor Cuomo directed the Department of Financial Services to require health insurers to provide coverage for contraceptive services and medically-necessary abortions without co-pays, coinsurance, or deductibles. The Governor has also called upon the State Senate to pass legislation codifying *Roe v. Wade* – a 1973 Supreme Court decision recognizing the constitutional right to abortion. The bill has passed in the Assembly for six consecutive years.

FDA expands quality metrics for medication-assisted treatment:

On Monday, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration announced an expansion of outcome measures used to demonstrate effectiveness of medication-assisted treatment (MAT) on opioid use disorders. Medication-assisted treatment, such as methadone and suboxone (buprenorphine), is used in combination with counseling to wean patients off opioids.

Under the new guidance, drug makers can prove efficacy by looking at drops in mortality, emergency department visits, and transmission of hepatitis C. Other outcome measures look at social impacts such as a patient’s ability to resume work or school. The FDA also plans to create a pathway by which drug makers can develop efficacy measures incorporating patient-reported experiences on the effects of MAT on opioid craving.

The new guidance reflects a broader understanding of the impact of opioid addiction and treatment on patient lives. Between 2016 and 2017, opioid-related emergency room visits rose by 30%. In the same year, a [study](#) published in the *Journal of Drug Abuse* identified a significant relationship between adolescent opioid use and absenteeism, truancy, and low productivity.