



May 15, 2020

Donna Frescatore  
State Medicaid Director  
State of New York, Department of Health  
Empire State Plaza, Corning Tower, Room 1466  
Albany, NY 12237

Dear Director Frescatore,

On behalf of people living with cystic fibrosis (CF) in New York, we thank you and the State of New York for all that you are doing to ensure the health and safety of state residents in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. While we understand that these are unprecedented times, we ask for your continued support of adequate funding for Medicaid.

Cystic fibrosis is a life-threatening genetic disease that affects approximately 1,600 people in New York and 30,000 people in the United States. CF causes the body to produce thick, sticky mucus that clogs the lungs and digestive system, which can lead to life-threatening infections. As a complex, multi-system condition, CF requires targeted, specialized treatment and medications. People with CF must be able to get their care at accredited CF care centers, where clinicians use evidence-based guidelines to deliver coordinated care centered on patients' unique needs.

Medicaid is a crucial source of coverage for patients with serious and chronic health care needs, including CF, and we urge you to reject any proposed reductions to eligibility or benefits. Almost half of children and over a quarter of adults living with CF in New York depend on the program for some or all of their health care coverage. Medicaid plays an important role in helping people with cystic fibrosis afford the specialized care and treatments they need to stay healthy. For many people with cystic fibrosis, Medicaid fills coverage gaps in private insurance that leave patients with unsustainable out-of-pocket costs.

We understand that New York is facing budget constraints as it works to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic but we are concerned that cuts to Medicaid will further stress hospitals and providers already in a weakened financial state. Reductions in provider reimbursement, in particular, will have a lasting effect on CF care centers, as they are often housed within academic medical centers, which see a disproportionate number of low-income patients. These medical centers rely on Medicaid for a large portion of their revenue and are already in financially precarious positions due to reduced volume in elective procedures. We have heard reports of care centers having to furlough or lay off staff; additional cuts to provider reimbursement could further exacerbate these issues and result in more centers losing critical staff.

We ask for your continued support of robust funding for Medicaid in any potential budget adjustments for the upcoming fiscal year. We appreciate your partnership and hope you will consider the CF Foundation a resource in the weeks and months ahead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mary B. Dwight". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and "D".

Mary B. Dwight  
Senior Vice President of Policy & Advocacy

cc: Paul Francis  
Deputy Secretary for Health and Human  
Services

Megan Baldwin  
Assistant Deputy Secretary for Health