



May 26, 2020

Senator Neil D. Breslin
172 State Street, Capitol Building
Room 430C
Albany, NY 12247

Dear Senator Breslin,

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, adequate funding for Medicaid is important now more than ever for people living with CF and the providers who treat them. As a champion for the CF community in New York, we ask for your support in elevating the need to protect Medicaid funding to leadership in your chamber.

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,

Mary B. Dwight

Senior Vice President of Policy & Advocacy
Cystic Fibrosis Foundation

Hossein Sadeghi, MD

Director, Pediatric CF Care Center
Children's Hospital of New York

Joan DeCelie-Germana, MD

Director, Pediatric CF Care Center
Cohen Children's Medical Center of New York

Emily Dimango, MD

Director, Adult CF Care Center
Columbia University Cystic Fibrosis Program

Robert Giusti, MD

Director, Pediatric CF Care Center
NYU School of Medicine

Robert Kaslovsky, MD

Director, Pediatric CF Care Center
Albany Medical College

Janice Wang, MD

Director, Adult CF Care Center
Long Island Jewish Medical Center