

# News Release

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**Michael G. Breslin - Albany County Executive**

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FOR RELEASE: Immediate

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## **County Executive Proposes Long Term Care Plan That Supports Choice, Independence** **Plan Expands Home and Community Based Services**

Albany County Executive Mike Breslin joined by New York State Office for the Aging Commissioner Michael Burgess and County Legislators Lucille McKnight and Ryan Horstmyer announced today a comprehensive long term care plan that would create more choices for people to live independently in the community.

Breslin said, “The recommendations in this report are inspired by the community’s changing needs and, most importantly, by a set of core values to provide independence, choice and dignity to all residents. The components of this plan will help to create a 21<sup>st</sup> century long term care system that provides more alternatives—the alternatives people prefer—to more people and at a lower cost to County taxpayers.”

The plan creates more assisted living programs and comprehensive medical and home care programs, known as Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) or Special Needs Plans (SNP); expands home and community-based services; and develops a public private partnership to guarantee nursing home care for those who need it.

County Legislator Patrick Timmins praised the plan, “It is clear to me that this document and the plan it outlines is the first real attempt to develop a comprehensive person centered system for coordination and provision of care for disabled people in Albany County. The input and concerns from all stakeholders are addressed in a thorough and honest way. I challenge those who disagree with its conclusions to explain to the citizens of Albany County, disabled or not, why we should not move forward with this progressive, people-centered approach focusing on serving the most people in the most efficient manner possible while honoring our mission to speak for the voiceless.”

At a time when the County faces a \$20 million budget gap, it is more important than ever that the County’s limited resources are used in the most effective manner to serve the most people. Last year, the County Nursing Home cost real property taxpayers over \$18 million. That is a subsidy of more than \$80,000 per patient and approximately 30 percent of the property tax levy. Building a new nursing home will not reduce the operating deficit. In 2014, after building a new facility, the loss – and the burden on Albany County property taxpayers – is estimated to be over \$24.2 million, equivalent to 38 percent of today’s property tax levy.

“The plan supports a system that provides the home and community services people want and makes nursing home care available for those who need it, without the County operating an expensive facility,” said Breslin.

As the chart below demonstrates, expanding home and community based services will provide hundreds more individuals with the services they prefer, more cost effectively than either the current system or one based on the construction of a new nursing home.

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Comparison of Current to Estimated Hypothetical System Costs and People Served with Either Home and Community Based Service (HCBS) Emphasis Contrasted to Building a New ACNH

	Total Cost Millions of \$	County Cost Millions of \$	Approximate Number People Served
Current System	\$ 145.8	\$ 32.4	4,800
Build a New Nursing Home & Reduce HCBS	\$ 154.9	\$ 36.1	4,500
Proposed Plan Emphasizing HCBS	\$ 131.0	\$ 14.0	5,700

The additional home and community based alternatives will mean fewer people will need skilled nursing home care. Most importantly, the components of this plan provides individuals with flexibility and the ability to choose the long term care services that best meet their needs.

The key elements of the plan include:

- Developing a public private partnership with local private skilled nursing facilities to ensure that those who need skilled nursing facility care will have facility choices within the county. Many local nursing home providers are interested in establishing this partnership with the County to guarantee nursing home beds exclusively for Albany County residents who would have otherwise been at the County Nursing Home. Those who rely upon Medicaid to access care would also be guaranteed placement through a new payment structure the County is developing with the New York State Department of Health;
- Establishing more Medicaid eligible assisted living program beds in the County;
- Supporting the development of comprehensive home and medical care programs, such as PACE, Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly; and
- Expanding support for in-home care, such as the Expanded In-Home Services for the Elderly Program (EISEP) and home delivered meals, adult day care and respite programs.

For several years the County has progressively met the increasing community demand for home and community based services by providing additional support for programs, such as home delivered meals, adult day care and Expanded In-Home Services for the Elderly Program (EISEP).

In June 2009 the County Legislature passed Resolution No. 205, asking the County Executive to develop a comprehensive long term care plan. During the planning process, Breslin met with hundreds of stakeholders, including seniors, individuals with disabilities, long term care providers, nursing home residents, family members, caregivers, taxpayers and other concerned citizens.

Many seniors, disability advocates and service providers joined Breslin at the announcement to show their support.

Denise Figueroa, executive director of the Independent Living Center of the Hudson Valley, said, “As a resident of Albany County and as the director of an independent living center serving people throughout the Capital District, I am proud to support a plan that is forward thinking and moves Albany County into a position of leadership in planning for the long term care of its citizens. This plan not only saves the taxpayers of the county, but provides the kind of care people want: community based services that allow people to age with dignity in their own homes. Too often, our current structure for long-term care forces people with disabilities of all ages into institutional settings in order to receive the services they need. The plan being put forth today, shifts the focus to the community, therefore preventing unnecessary placements in nursing homes. This plan has clearly been well thought out and deserves our support.

The full plan is available at [www.albanycounty.com/ltc](http://www.albanycounty.com/ltc).

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