

October 2017

Dear Friend,

With your help, the Schuyler Center works to dismantle inequity, improve health and well-being, and help children and families in need. I thought you would be interested in what has been happening in the world of child and family policy these last few months.

While the US Congress – both the House and the Senate – considered legislation with significant reductions to Medicaid, we examined potential impacts on New Yorkers, and people like you wrote letters, drafted op-eds, and urged people to contact their legislators.

Most frustrating is that proposals from the US Congress did *not* focus on improving health or health care. The proposals did *not* aim to strengthen systems but to make reductions to enable tax cuts. We fought.

- We made it our business to understand and explain potential impacts on New York State's children and families – rural and urban, young and old, and people with disabilities.
- We made it our business to understand the potentially far reaching impacts on children in foster care and on services that children receive in schools.
- We worked collaboratively with colleagues across the state and the nation to make sure our elected representatives heard us.

We defeated the most devastating proposals to cut Medicaid – health insurance coverage for people with low incomes and people who are disabled. For now. Some of those proposals will come back. We will be ready; we hope you will be with us.

Check out these photos of an event I moderated and an interview, together with Medicaid consumers, we had with the Capital Tonight political news program.



We're urging Members of Congress to quickly authorize funding for the vital Children's Health Insurance Program, which has always enjoyed bipartisan support. Called Child Health Plus (CHP) in New York, this program covers 344,000 children in working families with income just over the Medicaid level. Senator Chuck Schumer invited me to talk about children's health insurance at an event in the North Country.



The NYS legislative session wrapped up at the end of June. Both Houses voted in support of a policy that would strengthen New York's Kinship Guardianship Assistance Program (KinGAP), and enable children and youth to leave the foster care system more expeditiously. There are far too many children stuck for too long in foster care, and data show that New York could be doing much better.



AM Andrew Hevesi (left) and Senator Tony Avella (right) stand with advocates for KinGAP

The State Budget included a \$7 million reduction in the funding that helps very low-income families to afford child care. As you may know, child care costs exceed \$12,000 per child per year in most of the state and fewer than 20% of income-eligible families receive assistance. The budget cut will result in fewer low-income families with access to child care. This illogical budget cut has motivated a diverse and energized group to advocate for a restoration of and additional funding for child care in the coming budget year. With your support, we will help lead a charge to beat back cuts and secure investment in child care for families who need it.

Here is some news I hope you will find exciting and energizing! In August, New York Medicaid kicked off an innovative initiative, the "First 1,000 Days," focused on the first three years of a child's life. During the first 1,000 days of life, a child's brain develops rapidly which presents a crucial period of opportunity to support optimal development with lifelong consequences. Since 59% of all children age zero to three in New York State are covered by Medicaid, this program can play an important role ensuring strong outcomes for a large number of children. Also, since Medicaid is such an important payer of services, it can drive how health care providers and others operate with children and their families. I have been invited to lead this initiative with an incredible group of passionate and smart leaders and workgroup participants. New York State is truly leading the way in this work and friends and partners from other states approach me to learn more.

We continue to convene a passionate group of maternal, infant and early childhood home visiting providers, advocates, and to support State and local agencies. Our aim is to build better systems to support new and expecting parents across the state. One of our partners shared this story with us.

*Erica was pregnant with her first child, nervous about becoming a mom, and struggling with anxiety. She connected with a home visiting program and, during her pregnancy, met regularly with a trained nurse who shared information about nutrition; anxiety reduction, and baby care. After Erica delivered, anxiety continued to plague her: she was very stressed when her baby cried and she could not calm her down. With the help and support of the home visitor, Erica learned a variety of ways to console her baby and came to understand that it was okay to put the baby down in a safe place and walk away for a few minutes if she was too stressed out. Looking back, Erica says that what helped her most during those early days and months was knowing that people were supporting and assisting her in making good choices for herself and her baby.*

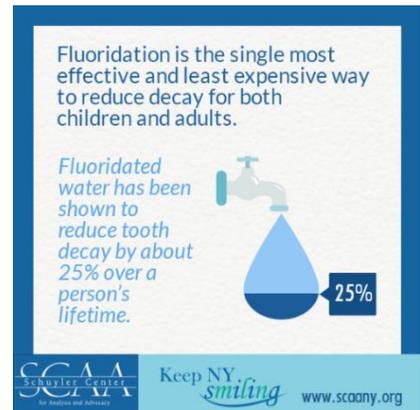


Despite the evidence about the effectiveness of home visiting, New York State barely scratches the surface of need. We're working to make sure policymakers understand the effectiveness and long-term success of home visiting and make appropriate investments now.

The Value-Based Payment (VBP) for Children workgroup, which I co-chair together with Dr. Jeff Kaczorowski from The Children’s Agenda, is finalizing recommendations. The large workgroup is composed of health care providers, insurers, child welfare experts, pediatric behavioral health leaders, and State and local leaders. The group embraced this value statement:

*“Focusing on the healthy growth and development of children will improve their quality of life. Children require a value based payment approach that acknowledges the specific needs attendant to each developmental stage and the unique opportunity to improve health and life trajectories, as well as the near-term improvements that are possible from direct health interventions. Support and recognition of families and caregivers is central to improving children’s lives.”*

Don’t forget community water fluoridation! As you know, with the support of the New York State Health Foundation and many of you, we have worked to improve oral health in New York by expanding access to community water fluoridation. Did you know that, outside of New York City, less than 50 percent of people have access to community water fluoridation? And did you know that community water fluoridation is the most effective way to prevent dental disease, which is also the most common chronic disease among children? We’re working closely with the New York State Department of Health to make sure local communities have the tools, resources and accurate information they need to implement community water fluoridation. We are also directly supporting local community members when they are bombarded by inaccuracies and myths put forward by groups opposed to fluoridation.



As you can see, the first half of 2017 was busy, productive, and challenging for those of us working to secure effective public policies for vulnerable New Yorkers. The fight has gotten even more challenging as income inequality widens, social media gives immediate and widespread voice to unproductive and unreasonable opinions, and funding for public policy advocacy becomes scarce. The Schuyler Center has taken on this fight since 1872 and we’re not stopping anytime soon. We are grateful for your interest and support.

Sincerely,

Kate Breslin  
President & CEO

# Thanks to YOU!

## Organizations

Alliance for Early Success  
Annie E. Casey Foundation  
Atlantic Philanthropies  
Booth Ferris Foundation  
Center for Children's Initiatives, Inc.  
CDWBA Legal Project, Inc.  
Charles S. Keene Trust  
Child Care Resources of Rockland  
Christ Community Reformed Church  
Council of Families & Child Care Agencies  
DentaQuest Foundation  
DePaul Housing/Catholic Charities Housing  
Family Planning Advocates of NYS  
First Focus Foundation  
Foundation for Quality of Care  
GIG Computer Services  
Hagedorn Foundation  
Health Foundation for Western & Central New York  
Hudson Headwaters Health Network  
Hunger Solutions New York  
LaSalle School, Inc.

Manatt, Phelps & Phillips, LLP  
Marshall & Sterling  
New York Foundling  
New York State Health Foundation  
NY Association of Independent Living  
NY Association of Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services  
NYS Conference of Local Mental Hygiene Directors  
Policy Research Associates  
Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation  
Redlich Horwitz Foundation  
SEFCU  
The David and Lucile Packard Foundation  
The Ford Foundation  
The New York Community Trust - Early Childhood Partners Fund  
The New York Community Trust - Gladys A. Bishop Memorial Fund  
The New York Community Trust - Hamilton F. Kean Fund  
TM Byxbee Company, CPAs  
United Hospital Fund of New York

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