



TO: Assembly Speaker Heastie and Senate Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins  
FROM: Corinne Carey, Senior Campaign Director, Compassion & Choices New York  
DATE: February 7, 2025  
RE: NY State Budget Testimony

On behalf of Compassion & Choices, I write in support of state budget funding for various programs that will improve end-of-life care for all New Yorkers. We thank you for your consideration of these important programs and encourage their adequate funding.

Compassion & Choices is the nation's oldest, largest and most active consumer-based nonprofit organization working to improve and expand healthcare options at life's end. We seek to ensure that patients can access the end-of-life care they want — nothing less and nothing more. Among our priorities is ensuring that all persons have access to high quality and affordable end-of-life care, regardless of race, geographic location, or socioeconomic factors.

By 2030, a quarter of New York State's population will be aged 60 or older. Furthermore, over 426,500 New Yorkers aged 65 and older have Alzheimer's disease. The population is aging, facing new challenges, and the burden of caring for these New Yorkers is mounting in significance, both on unpaid caregivers and on the larger health care system overall. In New York last year alone, 543,00 caregivers provided 879 million hours of unpaid care.

Many New Yorkers want – and deserve – to remain in their homes as they progress toward the end of life. However, in order to do so safely, they need support. Home care workers need to be paid adequate wages, including overtime, in order to maintain their livelihoods. Further, the Expanded In-Home Services for the Elderly Program provides a coordinated package of in-home and other supported services intended to support and supplement family caregivers. Finally, the Long Term Care Trust Program can offer care to aging New Yorkers, whether they choose to remain in their homes or seek nursing home care.

All of these programs require state funding to function as intended.

Compassion & Choices supports these programs to help New Yorkers get the end-of-life care they want, and encourages the New York State Assembly and Senate to consider them when developing the state budget.

In particular, we hope the legislature fully funds the following initiatives:

**Expanded In-home Services for the Elderly (EISIP).** EISEP is designed to catch those New Yorkers who don't quite qualify for Medicaid but cannot afford private help. Due to a lack of adequate funding in the last state budget, roughly 18,000 requests for services from older New Yorkers and their family caregivers have gone unfulfilled. This lengthy backlog causes many families to resort to nursing facilities, when they would prefer to stay in their homes. Had they been able to access EISEP, they would have received a coordinated package of in-home and other supported services intended to support and supplement family caregivers. This allows people to remain safely in their own homes, and can be a lifeline for those caregivers who struggle to balance helping their aging parents, maintaining a full-time job, and raising kids of their own.

**Fair Pay for Home Care.** Fair Pay for Home Care Act implements fair compensation and recognizes the valuable service provided by home care workers in New York. These workers play a crucial role in supporting elderly and disabled individuals, assisting with activities of daily living, personal care, and housekeeping in their own homes. The act acknowledges the importance of their work and aims to improve their overall well-being.

Furthermore, this act requires overtime pay for home care workers who work more than 40 hours per week. This would properly compensate them for their dedication and hard work, providing them with additional appreciation for the extra hours they put in caring for our loved ones. The Fair Pay for Home Care Act also establishes wage parity regulations, meaning that home care workers should receive comparable wages and benefits to those in similar roles in other healthcare settings, such as hospitals or nursing homes. By ensuring wage parity, the act aims to create a more equitable environment for home care workers, promoting fairness and equal treatment. All of these provisions would not only support the essential home care workforce, but also result in many more elderly and disabled New Yorkers being able to stay in their homes safely.