

August 13, 2009

Honorable Michael G. Breslin
County Executive
Albany County Office Building
112 State Street, Room 200
Albany, NY 12207

Albany County Legislature
Clerk of the Legislature
112 State Street, Room 710
Albany, NY 12207

Dear County Executive Breslin and County Legislators:

On behalf of AARP and our 50,000 members in Albany County, I am writing to urge you to consider the attached list of guiding principles as you develop a county long-term care plan.

Fundamental to these principles is a vision of long-term care that is grounded in consumer choice, independence, quality, and dignity. A county long-term care plan should clearly reflect and respond to the needs and preferences of its seniors and people with disabilities as well as those who love and support them. In addition, it is critical to address how best to support family caregivers who are the backbone of our long-term care system, providing 80 percent of this care.

According to an AARP survey, the overwhelming majority of New York residents age 50 and older prefer services that will enable them to age in place either at home or in other community settings.

Looking beyond consumer preference to a taxpayer perspective, it is simply more cost effective to provide quality care for our loved ones in the community than it is to support them in nursing homes. On average, Medicaid dollars can support nearly three older people and adults with physical disabilities with home- and community-based care for every one person in a nursing home.

AARP strongly believes that consumers should have access to a comprehensive range of services and supports, and they should receive unbiased information and assistance with accessing these options through a single point of entry. For individuals whose preference is nursing home care, the plan can incorporate models of home-like residences offering top-notch care and high levels of satisfaction for consumers and caregivers.

Albany County has a great opportunity to develop a plan that not only can save taxpayers money but establishes a system that is based on consumer choice. AARP urges you to use the attached principles to guide your efforts in planning for Albany County's system of long-term care.

We stand ready to assist you in your efforts to ensure that the plan brings about a quality long-term care system that best meets the needs and preferences of consumers.

Sincerely,



Lois Aronstein
AARP New York State Director