REPORT: NYS HAS MORE WORK TO DO ON MEDICAID

New York needs to give Medicaid patients more incentives to take better care of their own health, according to a report released today by the Empire Center.

The report, *Medicaid in Transition*, reviewed elements of the state’s ongoing Medicaid overhaul, with a special emphasis on efforts to improve patient behaviors and reduce incidence of chronic disease. The author, former deputy commissioner of the state Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance Russell Sykes, finds:

- Medicaid programs have found success by offering cash and non-cash incentives to get patients to stop smoking, lose weight and follow doctors’ instructions.
- New York’s incentive program, however, has reached less than one-tenth of one percent of its patients.
- Besides lowering costs, well-designed Medicaid programs can also improve the quality of care and the health of patients.

Medicaid was the single largest expense in last year’s state budget, Sykes notes, costing state taxpayers more than $22 billion. New York City and the 57 other counties are spending roughly $8 billion a year to support the program.

The report can be accessed at empirecenter.org/?p=22597.

The Empire Center, based in Albany, is an independent, non-profit, non-partisan think tank dedicated to promoting policies to make New York a better place to live, work and do business.

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