

County lawmakers expected to ask Cuomo to reconsider Medicaid proposal

[By RICK MILLER Olean Times Herald](#)

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LITTLE VALLEY — On Wednesday, Cattaraugus County lawmakers will review a resolution asking Gov. Andrew Cuomo to reconsider plans to shift Medicaid costs back to the counties.

Under terms of a previous budget, the state has already notified the county it plans to add at least \$1 million to the county's \$19.5 million Medicaid bill for 2020. Cuomo has chided the counties for not keeping the growth of Medicaid under 3%, particularly since the state had begun picking up Medicaid increases over 3% several years ago.

Cattaraugus County Social Services Commissioner Anthony Turano asked members of the County Legislature's Human Services Committee earlier this week if they would support a resolution to ask the governor to reconsider his proposal.

A resolution seeking immediate consideration will be introduced Wednesday to point out to Cuomo "that he is asking counties to control something we have no control over," Turano said.

The New York State Association of Counties Human Services and Medicaid Committee that met last week is urging counties across the state to ask the governor to reconsider — particularly because county budgets are already in place for 2020, Turano said Friday.

Other counties are expected to oppose the governor's Medicaid proposal as well, Turano said.

"Most everyone is concerned about the governor's budget presentation he made a few weeks ago," Turano said. "He's proposing a measure to control the deficit by shifting costs to counties ... We administer the programs. As agents of the state, we determine eligibility. We have no control who comes through those doors and no ability to control whatever their health care needs will be."

Turano said at a recent meeting of the New York Public Welfare Association, the state had "no suggestions on how to control costs."

In addition, the governor ignored a NYSAC request to put a representative from the counties on the Medicaid Redesign Team that is charged with making recommendations on how to bring down Medicaid costs.

"There are no local commissioners on the Medicaid Redesign Team," Turano said.

The state is looking at a possible \$6 billion deficit this year, including about \$4 billion in Medicaid costs.

“Our staff does a fantastic job administering the Medicaid program, but it is unfair to think it is a local district issue,” Turano said.

On top of everything else, Turano said if the state follows through and assigns anything over 3% of an increase in Medicaid costs from the previous year to the counties, it will blast through the county’s 2% tax cap.

The county would be penalized, he said, for exceeding the 3% property tax cap by the governor going back on his word to pick up counties’ increased Medicaid costs over 3%. “Our hope is that the county legislature will pass it on Wednesday and send it on to the governor and other counties,” Turano said.

The memorializing resolution is expected to receive unanimous support when it is introduced at Wednesday’s meeting.

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