STATE OF NEW YORK

8651

IN SENATE

January 7, 2026

Introduced by Sen. CLEARE -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Finance

AN ACT to amend the executive law, in relation to establishing the office of New York state benefits coordination

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. The executive law is amended by adding a new article 26-C to read as follows:

ARTICLE 26-C
OFFICE OF NEW YORK STATE BENEFITS COORDINATION

Section 760. Definitions.
761. Office of New York state benefits coordination; director.
762. Powers and duties.
763. State benefits portal.
764. Cooperation and assistance.

§ 760. Definitions. For the purposes of this article, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

1. "Director" shall mean the director of the office of New York state benefits coordination.

2. "Office" shall mean the office of New York state benefits coordination.

§ 761. Office of New York state benefits coordination; director. There is hereby created an office of New York state benefits coordination in the executive department. The head of the office shall be the director of New York state benefits coordination who shall be appointed by, and hold office at the pleasure of, the governor. The director shall receive a salary to be fixed by the governor within the amount appropriated therefor. The director may appoint such deputies, assistants, consultants and other employees as may be needed for the performance of the duties of the office and the director and may prescribe their powers and duties and fix their compensation within the amount appropriated therefor. Such office may have an office seal.

EXPLANATION--Matter in *italics* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [-] is old law to be omitted.

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§ 762. Powers and duties. The office shall have the following powers and duties:

1. Documenting all existing benefit programs across state government.

2. Maintaining a single portal website identifying all state benefit programs, with a staffed phone line for non-digital access.

3. Tracking benefit program funding and performance metrics.

4. Tracking pharmaceutical price negotiation and control efforts at the federal and state level.

5. Maintaining a database of provider resources including usage and performance data for such providers, where available.

6. Operating a universal benefits application that streamlines application processes and forms and is available in accessible formats, multiple languages, and submittable online. Such application shall be administered in coordination with all applicable agencies, and shall be able to be made available at multiple points of entry in the health care, commercial, nonprofit, and social service systems, as determined by the director. Such application shall be designed with health literacy and other culturally competent concerns tested on diverse cohorts of older adults and individuals with disabilities.

§ 763. State benefits portal. The portal website established pursuant to subdivision two of section seven hundred sixty-two of this article shall include:

1. Wellness, mental/behavioral health, substance use disorder and social isolation screening tools, including a wellness screening website and mobile application that can also be printed for completion by hand. Such screening tools shall include current, readily available, evidence-based screening tools for mental health, substance use disorder, loneliness, and suicide prevention and shall facilitate an appropriate individualized response. Individualized responses shall be available in multiple languages in compliance with section two hundred two-a of this chapter.

2. A provider-facing portal website for providers to assist or evaluate applicants.

3. Tracking data regarding individuals cross-enrolled in multiple benefits.

4. Integration with programs to assist with benefits education and applications.

5. A centralized repository for technology resources, trainings and supports.

6. Identification of benefits that an applicant may qualify for, even if they have not specifically applied for them.

7. Integration with transportation coordination applications.

8. Expanding outreach, communications, marketing, and assistance for individuals, including increased funding for the health insurance and information counseling and assistance program (HIICAP), facilitated enrollment for the aged, blind, and disabled (FE-ABD), and accessible nonprofit assistors, in compliance with section five hundred eight of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, that help people enroll in benefits for older adults that also address the changing needs as people age such as long-term care and home and community based services.

§ 764. Cooperation and assistance. All agencies, authorities, and institutions of the state shall cooperate and provide such assistance to the office as the director may request.

§ 2. This act shall take effect on the one hundred eightieth day after it shall have become a law.