STATE OF NEW YORK

9613

IN SENATE

March 30, 2026

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

AN ACT to amend the public health law, in relation to the statewide advance care planning public awareness campaign and to establish a community-based advance care planning outreach grant program; and making an appropriation therefore

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

Section 1. Short title. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Serious Illness Care Equity Act".

§ 2. Legislative findings and purpose. The legislature finds that advance care planning is essential to ensuring that individuals with serious illness receive care aligned with their values, preferences, and goals. Although chapter 406 of the laws of 2022 authorized a statewide advance care planning public awareness campaign, such a campaign has neither been funded nor implemented. The purpose of this act is to operationalize that authority, expand equitable access to advance care planning education, and establish a community-based outreach grant program to address persistent racial, cultural, and linguistic disparities.

§ 3. Paragraph (e) of subdivision 1 of section 207 of the public health law, as amended by chapter 406 of the laws of 2022, is amended and a new paragraph (e-1) is added to read as follows:

(e) **(i)** The commissioner shall establish a statewide advance care planning campaign to:

[~~(i)~~] **(1)** promote public awareness of hospice and palliative care services[~~;~~]**,** and palliative care options for patients with a terminal illness or condition;

[~~(ii)~~] **(2)** inform the public of the importance of advance care planning and the individual's right to direct and participate in health care decisions affecting the individual;

[~~(iii)~~] **(3)** educate individuals on the tools available to ensure their health care decisions are honored; and

[~~(iv)~~] **(4) highlight** the need and importance for consumers and patients to have an advance directive, particularly a health care proxy,

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

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and the need and importance for health care providers to play a leadership role in discussing end-of-life care preferences and values with patients and to provide patients with health care proxy forms.

(ii) The department shall implement the statewide advance care planning public awareness campaign authorized pursuant to this paragraph, both directly and via the community-based outreach grants authorized pursuant to paragraph (e-1) of this subdivision. Such campaign shall include statewide media outreach in multiple languages; culturally tailored messaging for underserved communities; dissemination of written, digital, and broadcast educational materials; development of tools to support advance directives and serious illness decision-making; and enhancement of digital navigation resources.

(e-1) (i) The department shall establish a community-based advance care planning outreach grant program to fund not-for-profit community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, including but not limited to immigrant-serving organizations, and other trusted community partners to conduct advance care planning education, outreach, and navigation.

(ii) The department shall enter into an agreement with an administrator to administer the grants and provide oversight of the community-based advanced care planning outreach grant program.

(iii) "Administrator" shall mean a statewide membership not-for-profit organization whose primary mission is to promote access to quality end of life care and that is contracted by the department.

(iv) Grant funds may be used for multilingual and culturally appropriate educational materials; advance care planning navigator programs; home-based counseling and education; community workshops, outreach events, and public engagement activities; and partnerships with hospice programs, palliative care providers and health care systems.

(v) Grantees shall report to the administrator and the department on measurable outcomes, including but not limited to the number of individuals reached, advance care planning conversations facilitated, and advance directives or related documents completed or supported.

(vi) The department shall submit an annual public report to the governor and the legislature evaluating campaign reach, grant program outcomes, and recommendations to improve equitable access to advance care planning.

§ 4. The sum of ten million dollars ($10,000,000), or so much thereof as may be necessary, is hereby appropriated to the department of health out of any moneys in the state treasury in the general fund to the credit of the community based advance-care planning outreach grant program, not otherwise appropriated, and made immediately available, for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of this act. Such moneys shall be payable on the audit and warrant of the comptroller on vouchers certified or approved by the commissioner of health in the manner prescribed by law.

§ 5. Severability clause. If any clause, sentence, paragraph, subdivision, section or part of this act shall be adjudged by any court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, such judgment shall not affect, impair, or invalidate the remainder thereof, but shall be confined in its operation to the clause, sentence, paragraph, subdivision, section or part thereof directly involved in the controversy in which such judgment shall have been rendered. It is hereby declared to be the intent of the legislature that this act would have been enacted even if such invalid provisions had not been included herein.

§ 6. This act shall take effect immediately.