

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:

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

3 ARTICLE 26-C
4 OFFICE OF NEW YORK STATE BENEFITS COORDINATION

5 Section 760. Definitions.

6 761. Office of New York state benefits coordination; director.

7 762. Powers and duties.

8 763. State benefits portal.

9 764. Cooperation and assistance.

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

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

14 2. "Office" shall mean the office of New York state benefits coordi-
15 nation.

16 § 761. Office of New York state benefits coordination; director. There
17 is hereby created an office of New York state benefits coordination in
18 the executive department. The head of the office shall be the director
19 of New York state benefits coordination who shall be appointed by, and
20 hold office at the pleasure of, the governor. The director shall receive
21 a salary to be fixed by the governor within the amount appropriated
22 therefor. The director may appoint such deputies, assistants, consult-
23 ants and other employees as may be needed for the performance of the
24 duties of the office and the director and may prescribe their powers and
25 duties and fix their compensation within the amount appropriated there-
26 for. 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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1 § 762. Powers and duties. The office shall have the following powers
2 and duties:

- 3 1. Documenting all existing benefit programs across state government.
- 4 2. Maintaining a single portal website identifying all state benefit
5 programs, with a staffed phone line for non-digital access.
- 6 3. Tracking benefit program funding and performance metrics.
- 7 4. Tracking pharmaceutical price negotiation and control efforts at
8 the federal and state level.
- 9 5. Maintaining a database of provider resources including usage and
10 performance data for such providers, where available.
- 11 6. Operating a universal benefits application that streamlines appli-
12 cation processes and forms and is available in accessible formats,
13 multiple languages, and submittable online. Such application shall be
14 administered in coordination with all applicable agencies, and shall be
15 able to be made available at multiple points of entry in the health
16 care, commercial, nonprofit, and social service systems, as determined
17 by the director. Such application shall be designed with health literacy
18 and other culturally competent concerns tested on diverse cohorts of
19 older adults and individuals with disabilities.

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

- 23 1. Wellness, mental/behavioral health, substance use disorder and
24 social isolation screening tools, including a wellness screening website
25 and mobile application that can also be printed for completion by hand.
26 Such screening tools shall include current, readily available,
27 evidence-based screening tools for mental health, substance use disorder,
28 loneliness, and suicide prevention and shall facilitate an appro-
29 priate individualized response. Individualized responses shall be avail-
30 able in multiple languages in compliance with section two hundred two-a
31 of this chapter.
- 32 2. A provider-facing portal website for providers to assist or evalu-
33 ate applicants.
- 34 3. Tracking data regarding individuals cross-enrolled in multiple
35 benefits.
- 36 4. Integration with programs to assist with benefits education and
37 applications.
- 38 5. A centralized repository for technology resources, trainings and
39 supports.
- 40 6. Identification of benefits that an applicant may qualify for, even
41 if they have not specifically applied for them.
- 42 7. Integration with transportation coordination applications.
- 43 8. Expanding outreach, communications, marketing, and assistance for
44 individuals, including increased funding for the health insurance and
45 information counseling and assistance program (HIICAP), facilitated
46 enrollment for the aged, blind, and disabled (FE-ABD), and accessible
47 nonprofit assistors, in compliance with section five hundred eight of
48 the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, that help people enroll in bene-
49 fits for older adults that also address the changing needs as people age
50 such as long-term care and home and community based services.

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

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