



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

David J. Valesky

AARP Thanks Senator Valesky for Voting to Pass CARE Act; Assembly Likely to Take Up

DAVID J. VALESKY April 23, 2015

| ISSUE: **AGING, HEALTH, HEALTH CARE, HOSPITALS, SENIORS**

ALBANY, New York – Critical help for millions of family caregivers across New York took a giant step toward reality this week when the State Senate – with the support of Senator David Valesky - unanimously (59-0) passed the **CARE Act**, legislation to support family caregivers as they safely help New Yorkers age at home.

The Caregiver Advise, Record, and Enable Act ensures hospital patients can designate a family caregiver and requires hospitals to offer that caregiver instruction and demonstrations of medical tasks they are being expected to provide for their loved ones at home, such as administering multiple medications, dressing wounds, and operating medical equipment.

“Having a designated caregiver who receives information and training in proper post-hospital care will reduce costly readmissions and speed recovery times,” said Senator Valesky, vice chair of the Senate Health Committee. “I was pleased to co-sponsor this legislation that will help to ensure better home care for patients, resulting in significant health care savings for families.”

“AARP thanks Senator Valesky for co-sponsoring and voting to pass the CARE Act in the Senate this week – and for voting for the CARE Act in the Senate Health Committee back in February,” said Beth Finkel, State Director for AARP in New York. “It’s a common sense solution; the better prepared family caregivers are when they take their loved ones home from the hospital, the smoother the transition will be for both patient and caregiver, and the better the health outcome.”

The CARE Act, AARP's top state legislative priority for 2015, is on the Assembly Health Committee's agenda next week. With Governor Andrew Cuomo having proposed a similar **Caregiver Support Initiative** in his 2015 Opportunity Agenda/State of the State, AARP is optimistic this important measure will become a reality this year and begin providing New York's family caregivers the tools they need to properly care for their loved ones.

The bill could help 1.6 million adult New Yorkers a year who are discharged home from hospitals, as well as many of the state's more than four million family caregivers – whose **numbers are only expected to increase** as New York's population ages. About half of all family caregivers perform medical and nursing tasks for their loved ones. AARP estimates New York's family caregivers provide **care valued at an estimated \$32 billion a year**.

The CARE Act, which has the support of a **wide range of organizations representing consumers, health advocates, seniors, and people with disabilities**, would help more New Yorkers age in their own homes, rather than in costly, taxpayer-funded nursing homes or other institutional settings.

The bill, which could reduce costly hospital readmissions, requires that patients have the opportunity to designate a family caregiver to be included in their official medical records, and that hospitals notify family caregivers prior to a patient's transfer or discharge.

The bill enjoys broad support among voters 50 and older in Onondaga County, where 94% think hospitals should **"explain and demonstrate" to family caregivers medical tasks** they'll have to perform when their loved ones are sent home from the hospital, a 2014 AARP survey found.