

PRESERVING MEDICAID

O'Mara advocates for fraud prosecution



O'Mara

ELMIRA — State Sen. Tom O'Mara, R-Big Flats, announced Thursday that he is co-sponsoring legislation to restore the incentive for local governments to combat abuse, fraud and waste in New York's \$60-billion-plus system of Medicaid.

Mayors, county executives and other local officials throughout the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions, and statewide, continually point to Medicaid as their most burdensome and costly unfunded state mandate.

A report released earlier this year by the New York State Association of Counties (NYSAC), "Real and Permanent Mandate Relief," noted that "counties outside of New York City send \$2.26 billion to the state each year for Medicaid, thereby

transferring a significant cost for the program to local property taxpayers, and contributing greatly to the disparity between property taxes in New York State and other states." According to NYSAC, the local cost of Medicaid and other state mandates are a major reason why property taxes in New York are 80 percent above the national average.

O'Mara said that in his testimony before the Legislature's fiscal committees in late January, state Medicaid Inspector Dennis Rosen stressed the importance of local efforts to help combat and prevent the fraud, waste and other abuses.

According to the latest enrollment figures, Medicaid provides benefits to 6.3 million, or nearly one-third, of New York's residents. Medicaid now costs approximately \$63 billion.

Furthermore, reports have projected Medicaid enrollment will rise to almost 6.5 million recipients in 2019 at a state cost alone of nearly \$25 billion.

"We need to restore the financial incentive for local governments to continue to root out Medicaid abuse, fraud and waste. This legislation would help achieve this important goal and hopefully encourage Medicaid fraud investigations and prosecutions at the local level," said O'Mara.

The state's current Medicaid payment cap limits the amounts that local governments are reimbursed

for successfully prosecuting Medicaid fraud cases. The legislation O'Mara is co-sponsoring would restore the financial incentive to prosecute fraud.

It would authorize local governments to keep 100 percent of the local share of any successful Medicaid fraud prosecution or settlement, or 10 percent of the total recovery, whichever amount is greater.

The legislation received unanimous Senate approval in 2015 but was never acted on by the Assembly.

It must be approved by both houses of the Legislature and signed by Gov. Andrew Cuomo before becoming law. It is currently in the Social Services Committee in the Senate, and the Health Committee in the Assembly.

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Moonrise	3:03 p.m.	4:03 p.m.
Moonset	4:49 a.m.	5:32 a.m.

Full	Last	New	First
Feb 22	Mar 1	Mar 8	Mar 15

Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.

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DEAR ABBY

Wife demands immediate reimbursement from friends

DEAR ABBY: When purchasing concert tickets online for others, when should you expect reimbursement? I say the charge hits your credit card immediately, and so should the payment you've advanced for that person. My husband thinks it should be when the tickets are mailed to you — which can take two to four weeks — and you either bring the tickets to your friends or they pick them up. What do you think? — CAUTIOUS FRIEND IN LOUISIANA

DEAR CAUTIOUS FRIEND: Your mistake was in not discussing payment arrangements BEFORE you bought the tickets. Unless immediate repayment was agreed upon at the time they were ordered, I agree with your husband that reimbursement when the tickets are delivered is appropriate.

DEAR ABBY: My boyfriend and I have been together for three years. We are both 29. When we have a fight, the first thing he does is text message my parents and tell them everything. I have asked him many times to please not involve them. We are adults and we should be able to handle our problems without interference from my parents. I never have, and never would, complain to his mother about him. His response has always been, "I can involve whoever I want." He knows I feel disrespected when he does this, and he still won't change. Is there anything else I can do? — HURT IN SANTA MARIA

DEAR HURT: Yes, you can change boyfriends.

DEAR ABBY: I'm a 26-year-old man, currently living in Boston and in my final year of grad school. My parents help me out with finances because I have very little income. One of the things they have done is keep me on the family phone plan. However, there's a catch: They recently announced that my "cost" for staying on their phone plan is installing an app that allows them to track my location at all times. In Boston, that's not a huge deal, but when I'm visiting them in Georgia on breaks, it's a point of contention, since I must let them know I'm taking a car. This will alert them to the fact I'll be out, and remove any trace of privacy I might have while I'm there. When I told them I'll pay my portion of the bill, their response was, "Would you prefer more texts and phone calls?" How can I deal with this situation? — NEEDS MY PRIVACY

DEAR NEEDS PRIVACY: Your parents are treating you like a child, although you are an adult and should be entitled to some privacy. Look into ways of getting a reasonably priced phone plan, i.e., a prepaid phone. And when you visit them, refrain from using their car if it's an issue. (Perhaps your friends can pick you up and drop you off instead?)

—Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

TALKING JOBS

Who wouldn't hire that guy?

Dear J.T. & Dale:

Six months ago I took what I thought would be my dream job with a company I adored. Sadly, once inside the organization, I learned that it was highly dysfunctional. The job became so stressful, with arguing and backstabbing, that I got physically sick. After a discussion with my wife, I decided to resign. I immediately felt better, but now that I'm going on interviews, I'm struggling to explain what happened. Suggestions? — RORY J.T.: When on interviews, it's difficult to explain away what happened to you without throwing your former employer under the bus. And when you throw an employer under the bus, it's very hard for the next employer to see you as a good hire. **DALE:** Here's the problem: Recruiters are trained to think the worst. Why? Because their first priority is to avoid a bad hire. So, when you quit a company with a great reputation, you look like a malcontent; or maybe they think you must have been shoved out.

J.T.: To overcome this, you should stick to the facts and be as objective as possible when explaining what transpired. Then take ownership of the situation. By that I mean you should explain what you've learned from the experience and how



DALE DAUTEN AND JEANINE "J.T." O'DONNELL

you've grown. Tell them specifically, if you can, what you would have done differently. Then tell them how important it is that you find a new employer and put this behind you so you can give the new employer 200 percent. By being honest without getting emotional, and by taking ownership, you will show your character without having to speak poorly of the former employer.

DALE: All good advice, except I would quibble with the idea of getting specific. Instead, I would blame politics, saying something like: "I thought it would be a dream job, but it turned out that it was constant office politics. Plenty of people had knives sticking out of their backs. I tried to get along with everyone, but it was impossible. So I left to devote myself to finding a real team, a place where we work together and help one another succeed." Bang. Who doesn't want to hire that guy?

Dear J.T. & Dale: I am so frustrated with my job

search. I have applied to hundreds of companies, and I never hear back from a single one. Why are companies so rude? — Nanci

DALE: There was a time when companies made an effort to respond. I once did consulting work with a big brewery that sent a nice reply to every job applicant, including an invitation to a special brewery tour. However, over the years, applying for jobs got much, much easier — no classy stationery needed, no trip to Kinko's, no typing up a custom cover letter, no postage — and the burden of responding grew along with all of those easy applications. Eventually, during one economic downturn, eliminating that function became an easy choice.

J.T.: Yes, it's not companies being rude but rather the sheer volume of applications that makes it impossible for them to respond to every one. Let me explain the magnitude of the problem: A recent study showed that the average job posting gets over 200 applications, with the first one coming in within 200 seconds of the posting.

DALE: And that's got to be for an unknown company. Imagine the size of the problem for larger companies. Let's put "rudeness" in

perspective by personalizing the issue. Picture an email marketer sitting at his desk and thinking: "We've sent Nanci 20 offers for great deals on a new parka, and she hasn't said squat in reply. That Nanci is so rude!" So just stop expecting a response to your applications. That way, if you get one, you'll be pleasantly surprised.

J.T.: Or just blame your job-search process. Stop applying blindly online and then sitting back and hoping, because you have seen the results of that. Instead, focus on identifying companies where you'd love to work and networking your way to making connections with people who work there. Remember that 80 percent of jobs come through referrals. I always tell my clients, "Your network is your net worth."

—Jeanine "J.T." Tanner O'Donnell is a professional development specialist and the founder of the consulting firm jtdonnell.com. Dale Dauten resolves employment and other business disputes as a mediator with AgreementHouse.com. Please visit them at jtanddale.com, where you can send questions via email, or write to them in care of King Features Syndicate, 300 W. 57th St., 15th Floor, New York, NY 10019.

SUPREME COURT TERM LIMITS

Some want to limit justices to 18 years

By Mark Sherman
 The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Justice Antonin Scalia's sudden death a month before his 80th birthday and the potential impasse over replacing him is giving new impetus to an old idea: Limiting the service of Supreme Court justices.

Scalia had been on the court for nearly 30 years, longer than any of the current justices and all but 14 of the 112 men and women who have served on the court.

"I think 30 years on the court is too long for anyone — liberal or conservative. That is just too much power in one person's hands for too long a period," said Erwin Chemerinsky, a liberal legal scholar and dean of the law

school at the University of California at Irvine.

The Constitution says federal judges "shall hold their offices during good behaviour," which means essentially as they long as they wish.

The most talked-about

idea has support among both liberals and conservatives. A single 18-year-term would replace lifetime tenure.

Going forward, presidents would appoint a justice every two years, ensuring both continuity on the court and two picks for each presidential term. On the right, former Texas Gov. Rick Perry advanced a

similar idea during his 2012 Republican campaign for president.

The Supreme Court already had been a topic of conversation in the presidential race. Scalia's death has brought into stark relief how Supreme Court appointments can be a president's most lasting legacy.

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