

New York State Academy of Family Physicians

16 Sage Estate • Albany, NY 12204
Email: fp@nysafp.org • www.nysafp.org

518-489-8945



June 22, 2022

Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor
Executive Chamber
State Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

Re: Approval of S.6534-C, Rivera/ A.7230-B, Gottfried, *Establishes a Primary Care Reform Commission*

Dear Governor Hochul:

The New York State Academy of Family Physicians (NYSAFP), which represents nearly 7,000 physicians, residents, and students in family medicine across New York State, urges your approval of this legislation to establish a primary care reform commission to review, examine and make findings on the level of primary care spending by all payors, public and commercial, to determine what percentage of total healthcare spending in the State is attributable to primary care.

The commission would consist of the Commissioner of the State Department of Health and the Superintendent of the Department of Financial Services, along with fifteen other members as appointed by your Administration, with recommendations from the Senate and Assembly Majority and Minority leadership. The bill states that members shall have expertise in health care financing, reimbursement, and regulation, representing practicing primary care providers, federally qualified health centers, professional practice groups, primary care advocates, consumers, businesses, health plans and hospitals or health systems.

The commission would publish reports on its findings and make recommendations to increase spending on primary care, strengthen primary care infrastructure in the State and increase patient access to timely primary care, without increasing costs to patients or to the total cost of health care. The first report would look at several areas including current primary care spending by region, recommendations for the definition of primary care for the purpose of the commission's work, recommendations for legislative and executive actions, identification of barriers including current payment methodologies, and a plan to increase primary care spending.

Increased investments in primary care services and expanding patient access to primary care saves money. The focus on preventative care by promoting public health practices and patient care management drive efficiencies in primary care. Primary care can help prevent disease or its progression and in turn, reduce hospitalizations, emergency department visits and patient mortality while increasing patient satisfaction. And yet, only a fraction of overall healthcare spending in the United States goes to primary care- with estimates of as little as 5% of healthcare funding on primary care.

Clearly a paradigm shift is needed in how we view and invest in primary care as part of our healthcare system, and we believe the creation of this commission can play a critical role in examining these issues and making recommendations for New York to more appropriately support primary care services to improve care and access for its residents.

We urge your approval of this legislation to redefine our priorities spend for healthcare spending in New York State. Increasing investment in primary care will produce better patient care and outcomes and will ultimately reduce costs.

Additionally, as a leading voice in medicine, representing family physicians who specialize in the primary and preventative needs of their patients, young and old and throughout their lives, we request that you appoint one of our members to this important commission.

We thank you for your consideration of these comments. We welcome further discussions with your office regarding our comments on this legislation and we remain available to continue to serve as a resource to you on any primary care or healthcare issues generally.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Andrew Symons".

Andrew B. Symons, MD
President