

# RM&S

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## RMS End of Week Update 9/12/2025



### **Governor Hochul Signs Legislation To Support Families Of 9/11 Victims**

On the anniversary of September 11, 2001, Governor Kathy Hochul announced that she has signed legislation to expand access to resources and provide more opportunities for the families and loved ones of those who have been impacted by the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The package of bills will revive and strengthen the September 11th Worker Protection Task Force, bolster the pathway to public service for children and siblings of New York City sanitation workers who lost their lives due to exposure and cleanup after September 11th, and expedite the World Trade Center disability and death benefit application process to ensure survivors are eligible to obtain vital benefits.

“The 9/11 terrorist attacks are events that we will never forget. We must continue to honor the fallen heroes who put their lives on the line to protect New Yorkers, as well as their families who have been impacted by these horrific events,” Governor Hochul

said. "This legislation will give back to the families of 9/11 victims, ensuring they are supported by the state and their loved ones are forever remembered."

Governor Hochul signed the following bills into law:

- **Legislation A.2123-A/S.1165-A** provides children and siblings of NYC sanitation workers who have died from 9/11-related illnesses and injuries additional civil service exam points for a position located in the municipality where their deceased parent or sibling served.
- **Legislation A.8417/S.8181** revitalizes the September 11th Worker Protection Task Force by requiring new appointments to the taskforce, setting a biannual meeting requirement, expanding areas of study, resetting the June deadline for the annual report and extending the provisions of the act until June 10, 2030.
- **Legislation S.4554-A/A.5458-A** expedites the World Trade Center disability and death benefit application process by allowing the NYC Police Pension Fund to rely on a timely and properly filed Notice of Participation as requisite criteria for establish participation in rescue, recovery and cleanup operations at the World Trade Center, unless an employer proves otherwise.

**To view the full press release please click [here](#).**

### **NYS Department of Health Announcement Following Devastating Federal Funding Cuts, To Take New Action to Preserve Health Care for As Many New Yorkers As Possible**

This week the New York State Department of Health announced that the State is taking proactive action to preserve access to health care for as many New Yorkers as possible following devastating cuts in federal funding from the Republican-passed budget bill H.R.1. A 30-day public comment period opened September 10th on the State's proposed plan to end the State Innovation Waiver and return to a Basic Health Program.

The federal law eliminates \$7.5 billion in annual funding for New York State's Essential Plan, jeopardizing health care coverage for the nearly 1.7 million low- and middle-income New Yorkers who are currently enrolled in the program.

Due to this funding cut from H.R.1, the State has no choice but to terminate its groundbreaking Section 1332 State Innovation Waiver and Essential Plan expansion. To preserve coverage for as many New Yorkers as possible, Governor Hochul is proposing to revert to the Basic Health Program. This action would allow an estimated 1.3 million New Yorkers to remain enrolled in the program and mitigate revenue losses to the health care delivery system despite the federal Government's targeted disinvestments.

"I have been very direct and clear with New Yorkers about the disastrous impact of H.R.1 on our health care system, and the devastating choices it would force states to make," State Health Commissioner Dr. James McDonald said. "By reverting to a Basic

Health Program, Governor Hochul is making sure that 1.3 million working people will be able to keep their affordable health insurance. Even with these steps, too many New Yorkers – nearly half a million– will lose affordable health coverage and be forced to choose between keeping food on the table and paying their medical bills. I am grateful to Governor Hochul for standing up and doing what's right while Washington Republicans rip health care away from their constituents."

As a result of the drastic budget cuts in the newly enacted federal Law, an estimated 450,000 middle class New Yorkers will lose access to zero-premium comprehensive health insurance despite the State's efforts.

The reduction of federal funding will lead to coverage losses and increases in uncompensated care for New York State providers, who will be left to cover the costs of uninsured New Yorkers. This will affect the delivery of health care services for all New Yorkers and could force facilities to close. Communities across the state will also incur job losses and economic loss as healthcare dollars disappear from communities. Congressional inaction to repeal or delay H.R.1 changes to premium tax credit eligibility for lawfully-present individuals will force New York State to terminate its waiver and leave hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers uninsured.

The 1332 Waiver proved that innovative healthcare policy can work. Last year, [NYS officials celebrated New York's Section 1332 waiver as a groundbreaking achievement](#).

The program expanded the Essential Plan to New Yorkers who are not eligible for Medicaid with incomes up to 250% of the federal poverty level, or about \$39,125 annually for an individual, providing comprehensive health insurance with zero monthly premiums, no deductibles, and minimal cost-sharing. The expansion saved participants an average of over \$6,000 per year compared to Qualified Health Plan coverage.

As the full impact of these federal changes comes into effect, New York State is committed to an orderly transition, as well as collaborating with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to design and provide affordable coverage options for impacted enrollees. In addition to providing consumers with 90-days notice prior to their eligibility change, New York State will provide a special enrollment period for CMS-approved coverage options and enhanced customer service assistance to affected consumers to ease the transition.

**The New York State Department of Health is opening a public comment period today, September 10, 2025, through October 10, 2025, on the plan to transition from the 1332 waiver to a Basic Health Program. Instructions for submitting public comments are posted at <https://info.nystateofhealth.ny.gov/1332>.**

The transition to a Basic Health Program is anticipated to take effect by July 1, 2026, pending approval by CMS, giving the State time to implement these protective measures while following federal requirements for waiver termination.

**Statement From Governor Kathy Hochul On DOH Essential Plan Announcement:**

“For months, I’ve warned that Washington Republicans’ devastating cuts would rip health care away from New Yorkers. Today, we have no choice but to confront that reality.

Nearly 1.7 million New Yorkers rely on the Essential Plan for health care – working moms and dads, families living paycheck to paycheck, people doing everything right and still struggling to get by. The Big Ugly Bill forced through by Donald Trump and Republicans puts every single one of them at risk of losing their care. I refuse to stand by while Washington punishes vulnerable New Yorkers. That’s why today, I’m taking action to preserve health care for 1.3 million people by shifting their coverage to our state’s Basic Health Program, allowing us to access emergency funds that would otherwise not be available.

But even with these steps, 450,000 New Yorkers are at risk of losing their care. That includes 127,000 people represented by New York’s seven Republican Members of Congress, who are abandoning their own constituents to hand out tax breaks for the wealthy. It doesn’t have to be this way. If Republicans give a damn about protecting health care for their constituents, they can act right now to pass a three-year delay of HR1’s cuts to health care eligibility and keep every New Yorker on the Essential Plan covered. And in the meantime, the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services needs to work with us to identify more low-cost health insurance options for New Yorkers.

There is still work to do here in New York. Many of the 1.7 million people on the Essential Plan are working part time, including at big retailers and other companies that deliberately limit hours to avoid covering health care. It’s time for these employers to stop passing the cost on to taxpayers and start providing coverage for their workers.

The message from across our state is clear: we can act together and stop these devastating impacts before it’s too late.”

**Statement from Senate Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins On DOH Essential Plan Announcement:**

"Today's announcement from the Department of Health highlights the severe repercussions of Washington Republicans' reckless and inhumane budget bill. By eliminating \$7.5 billion in annual federal funding for New York's Essential Plan, Congressional Republicans - including the seven who represent New York - have deliberately destabilized healthcare for their constituents and millions of working

families across our state.

Governor Hochul's decision to revert to a Basic Health Program is an appropriate step to safeguard coverage for 1.3 million New Yorkers. However, due to the GOP's assault, nearly half a million of our neighbors could lose affordable healthcare altogether.

It is crucial to recognize that these cuts are not accidental. They are a deliberate strategy employed by the Republican Party to reverse progress, dismantle affordable healthcare coverage, and force everyday New Yorkers to choose between paying their bills and seeking medical attention."

**Statement from Assembly Speaker Heastie On DOH Essential Plan Announcement:**

"Losing the Essential Plan is a devastating blow to hard working New Yorkers brought on due to the draconian measures implemented by the federal government in their Big Terrible Bill. Representatives Elise Stefanik, Mike Lawler, Nick LaLota, Nicole Malliotakis, Andrew Garbarino, Claudia Tenney and Nick Langworthy voted to give their billionaire donors the gift of tax breaks and tax cuts, and now hardworking New Yorkers will have to bear the fallout because of their actions.

This will have ripples across our healthcare system, putting more stress on already overburdened emergency rooms and causing almost half a million people to lose access to healthcare. Make no mistake, this will affect every single New Yorker, and no amount of obfuscating and gaslighting by our Republican members of Congress can change that. I will continue to work with my partners at all levels of government to try and find solutions to protect New Yorkers from the cruelty that the administration in Washington continues to push."

[Link to full DOH Press Release](#)

[Instructions For Submitting Public Comments](#)

[Link to Governor Hochul Statement](#)

[Link to Speaker Heastie Statement](#)

**Governor Hochul Calls On Insurers To Cover Vaccines In New York State**

This week Governor Kathy Hochul announced new action to protect vaccine access across New York State. The New York State Department of Financial Services (DFS) is issuing guidance to insurers encouraging them to continue covering all vaccines recommended by The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). ACIP has long been responsible for issuing recommendations on vaccine use to control disease in the United States, and insurers typically provide coverage of vaccines based on ACIP recommendations. This publication also reminds insurers of previously issued guidance requiring insurers to cover COVID vaccines for children. In addition, the guidance urges

insurers to encourage employers and other entities who provide self-funded health care coverage to continue covering the cost of vaccines.

New Yorkers deserve to have the resources available to get vaccinated if they choose to, and Republicans in Washington should not be able to take that from them,” Governor Hochul said. “Vaccines not only prevent people from getting sick — they can save lives and prevent the spread of infectious diseases, especially as we approach our colder seasons and our children are back in schools.”

New York State Superintendent of Financial Services Adrienne A. Harris said, “Public health experts have been clear that vaccines are an essential tool in combating the spread of infectious diseases and lowering the cost of health care. The cost of a vaccine should not be a barrier to this critical care. DFS strongly encourages insurers to continue to provide comprehensive vaccine coverage for all New Yorkers.”

New York State Health Commissioner Dr. James McDonald said, “In 2024, we lost 2,775 New Yorkers related to COVID, that is enough to fill 7 jumbo jets. Vaccines are the best protection from serious illness and hospitalization. I want to thank Governor Hochul for her leadership in taking swift action to ensure that vaccines remain accessible and affordable for families across our state. By safeguarding coverage and availability, we can prevent illness, save lives and keep our communities healthy as we head into the colder months.”

New York is also working in coordination with — and helping to lead — a regional multi-state public health collaboration among Northeast states, which brings together public health leaders across the region to develop evidence-based recommendations and approaches on vaccination, disease surveillance, and emergency preparedness. The collaborative also supports state public health laboratories in sharing resources and expertise to strengthen regional readiness.

[DFS’s Guidance Letter To New York’s Insurance Industry](#)  
[Governor Hochul's Full Press Release](#)

### **Lawmakers Working On Bill To Expand N.Y. Health Department Vaccine Authority**

A recent article published in [Spectrum News](#) stated that lawmakers are working to amend legislation to give the state Health Department more authority over vaccine recommendations they plan to adopt when they return to Albany next year.

Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie's spokesman Michael Whyland said Thursday he's certain state leaders will work closely with Gov. Kathy Hochul in early 2026 to give state health officials the power to act in place of U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention to make vaccine recommendations.



The U.S. Food & Drug Administration, at the behest of U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., recently changed regulations of who is eligible to receive the COVID vaccine — making it more difficult for children, pregnant women and adults under 65 without health conditions to get the shot.

"Our normal regulatory and statutory structures related to vaccine dispensation are breaking down, and that's exactly what we anticipated when we put the bill in the spring," said Assemblyman Micah Lasher, a Manhattan Democrat.

Lasher and Sen. Brad Hoylman-Sigal introduced a bill this spring to remove the state's requirement to follow the CDC's vaccine recommendations and allow licensed pharmacists to administer any immunizations recommended by New York's health commissioner. But it was never brought to the floor for a vote.

"It had not turned into a crisis at the time of the legislative session, and so our priorities were elsewhere," Lasher said. "I think obviously, it is now a crisis."

Gov. Hochul signed an executive order last week to allow pharmacists to prescribe and administer the COVID vaccine to New Yorkers as young as age 3. The 30-day order will likely be extended until the Legislature adopts a more permanent solution.

Lawmakers amended the proposal last week to expand its scope but work on the measure continues. Lasher said conversations are ongoing to answer complicated questions and ensure adequate insurance coverage of immunizations in absence of CDC recommendations.

"This is a complicated substantive discussion," Lasher said. "We are going through the process of reviewing the bill to make sure that it addresses all of the facets of law necessary to do what we're setting out to achieve, which is to ensure that New Yorkers can access safe, important medication and vaccines, even if and as long as the CDC has ceased to be a pro-science, pro-public health entity."

Sen. Hoylman-Sigal said the legislation is necessary to permanently safeguard vaccine access statewide.

"[The] executive order offers only temporary relief, leaving New Yorkers in limbo and at the whims of the federal administration," Hoylman-Sigal said Thursday. "New Yorkers and their providers deserve certainty and the state should have clear, unambiguous statutory authority to promulgate vaccine schedules and facilitate vaccine access."

The Medical Society of the State of New York is on board with the plan.

"If we can't get good guidance from the federal government, we should take ownership

and make sure that we protect the citizens of New York," said MSSNY President Dr. David Jakubowicz.

New York currently relies on federal vaccine guidelines from the CDC and the U.S. Health and Human Services Department, which insurance companies use to determine which immunizations to cover.

"They've taken away the recommendations for pregnant women and for children or healthy children to get the COVID vaccination, which has been causing issues as far as accessibility," Jakubowicz said. "At this point, given those changes, people who wish to get the COVID vaccination are having trouble getting that."

The state Department of Financial Services issued guidance to insurance companies Wednesday, which highly recommends plans cover the shots and implied that in some cases it may be required under state law.

"Our members recognize the importance of vaccines in protecting the public against preventable infections and disease and health plans and plan sponsors remain prepared to make coverage decisions informed by science, the latest medical evidence and data," according to a statement from the state Health Plan Association. "Plans use evidence-based decision making processes that evaluate multiple sources of data, including, but not limited to ACIP."

Oregon, Washington and California are already issuing separate vaccine guidelines from the CDC.

He urged New York lawmakers to follow suit, and to ensure insurance companies cover the vaccine so it's accessible to consumers.

COVID vaccines typically cost between \$200 to \$250 per shot — more than double most other immunizations, Jakubowicz added.

"Unlike many of the other vaccinations that we're offering, the mRNA vaccinations from Moderna and Pfizer are fairly expensive," he said.

Lasher said the state could return to using CDC guidance if the agency returns to making vaccine recommendations based on scientific data — not politics.

"We can we can have a broader debate about vaccines and vaccine efficacy," the assemblyman said. "This is about whether New Yorkers can choose to access the COVID vaccine and other vaccines that have historically been available to them, and whether New York state has the power to look out for the public health interests of its residents when the CDC has stopped doing so."



When Hochul signed the executive order, her office announced that she will be working with the Legislature on a solution to ensure permanent access to vaccines, including administration of vaccines by health care professionals, school immunization schedules and insurance coverage.

The state will only recommend vaccines approved by the FDA.

**To view the full article please click [here](#).**

### **Governor Hochul and MTA Announce Continued Success of Congestion Pricing**

This week Governor Kathy Hochul and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) announced that as summer draws to a close, New York City's congestion relief program has continued to successfully reduce traffic and improve travel times throughout the region.

August saw nearly 2.7 million fewer vehicles than baseline enter the congestion relief zone, a 14 percent reduction. August was level with June for the largest vehicle reduction seen so far in 2025. Congestion pricing continues to generate revenue to fund transit improvements across the region, including new rail cars, accessibility improvements, and enabling the advancement of the Second Avenue Subway Phase 2.

“With summer coming to an end, the benefits of congestion pricing are clearer than ever,” Governor Hochul said. “This program has been nothing short of transformational, making streets safer, reducing gridlock across the region, and unlocking generational upgrades to mass transit, benefitting millions. Congestion pricing is working, it is legal, and the cameras are staying on.”

MTA Chair and CEO Janno Lieber said, “In less than a year, New Yorkers are seeing massive benefits from congestion relief, including new rail cars, dozens of ADA elevators and signal modernization. This initiative has demonstrated that government can do big things that deliver results — less traffic, safer streets, and improved quality of life for transit users, drivers and pedestrians alike.”

#### **Less Traffic, Safer Streets:**

Congestion pricing has shown continued success in reducing traffic, speeding up the flow of traffic, and cutting down delays, not just in the congestion relief zone but throughout the New York metropolitan region. The number of vehicles entering the zone is down by 12 percent since congestion pricing started. Every day, 87,000 fewer vehicles enter the zone, and since the program started, 17.6 million fewer vehicles have entered the zone compared to last year.

### Rising Transit Ridership:

Transit ridership across all modes has increased from January to August 2025 when compared to the same period last year.

- Subway: 9 percent
- Bus: 13 percent
- LIRR: 10 percent
- Metro-North: 7 percent
- Access-A-Ride: 22 percent

In July, the MTA achieved its best summer subway ridership week since 2019, hitting four million subway riders three days in a row in a summer season — a first since the start of the pandemic. The Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) shattered its post-pandemic daily ridership record twice in July, carrying 298,419 passengers on Wednesday, July 23, and 295,419 passengers on Tuesday, July 22.

### Improving Transit Performance:

Transit service has improved across-the-board in 2025 to near-record heights. In August, subway weekday On-Time Performance was 85.2 percent, the best for that month in 10 years. Overall summer On-Time Performance on the subway was 84.3 percent, up from both 2024 and 2023.

Long Island Rail Road and Metro-North On-Time Performance have consistently been at or near 97 percent in 2025. Buses are moving faster thanks to congestion pricing. According to a new report from the New York City Comptroller, buses operating entirely or partially in the congestion relief zone have seen improvements to speed and overall performance in excess of citywide baselines. August also saw the final implementation of the MTA's Queens bus Network Redesign.

At the same time, economic indicators demonstrate that congestion pricing has coincided with an increase in business activity in Manhattan's central business district. A new report from Placer AI found that New York City office visits in July exceeded pre-pandemic levels for the first time, the first city in the nation to achieve that benchmark in their analysis.

**To view the full press release please click [here](#).**

### **NYS Legislature Upcoming Public Hearings**

**Date:** Sept. 30, 2025

#### **Joint - Senate Standing Committee on Corporations, Authorities, and Commissions**

**Chair:** Senator Leroy Comrie and

**Senate Standing Committee on Energy and Telecommunications**

**Chair:** Senator Kevin Parker

**Public Hearing:** Oversight of the Public Service Commission's processes related to rate case and generic proceedings, and the Department of Public Service's efforts to implement the goals of the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act

**Place:** Senate Hearing Room, 250 Broadway, 19th Floor,  
New York, New York

**Time:** 10:00 A.M.

**Contact:** Nia James (518) 455-2701

**Media Contact:** Jayda Sealy (718) 765-6359

ORAL TESTIMONY BY INVITATION ONLY

**Date:** Oct. 14, 2025

**Joint - Assembly Standing Committee on Consumer Affairs and Protection**

**Chair:** Assembly Member Nily Rozic and

**Assembly Standing Committee on Science and Technology**

**Chair:** Assembly Member Steven Otis

**Public Hearing:** Data Privacy and Consumer Protections

**Place:** Roosevelt Hearing Room C, Legislative Office  
Building, 2nd Floor, Albany, New York

**Time:** 10:00 A.M.

**Contact:** Allison Dooher (518) 455-4857

**Media Contact:** Assembly Press Office (518) 455-3888

ORAL TESTIMONY BY INVITATION ONLY

**Date:** Oct. 16, 2025

**Senate Standing Committee on Internet and Technology**

**Chair:** Senator Kristen Gonzalez

**Public Hearing:** To discuss risks, solutions, and best practices with respect to the use of artificial intelligence in consequential or high-risk contexts, and related issues, such as classification of the types and risk levels of AI uses, frameworks for auditing AI tools for bias, and transparency improvements

**Place:** Senate Hearing Room, 250 Broadway, 19th Floor,  
New York, New York

**Time:** 10:00 A.M.

**Contact:** Elan Silver (718) 765-6674

**Media Contact:** Katherine Veloso (718) 765-6674

ORAL TESTIMONY BY INVITATION ONLY

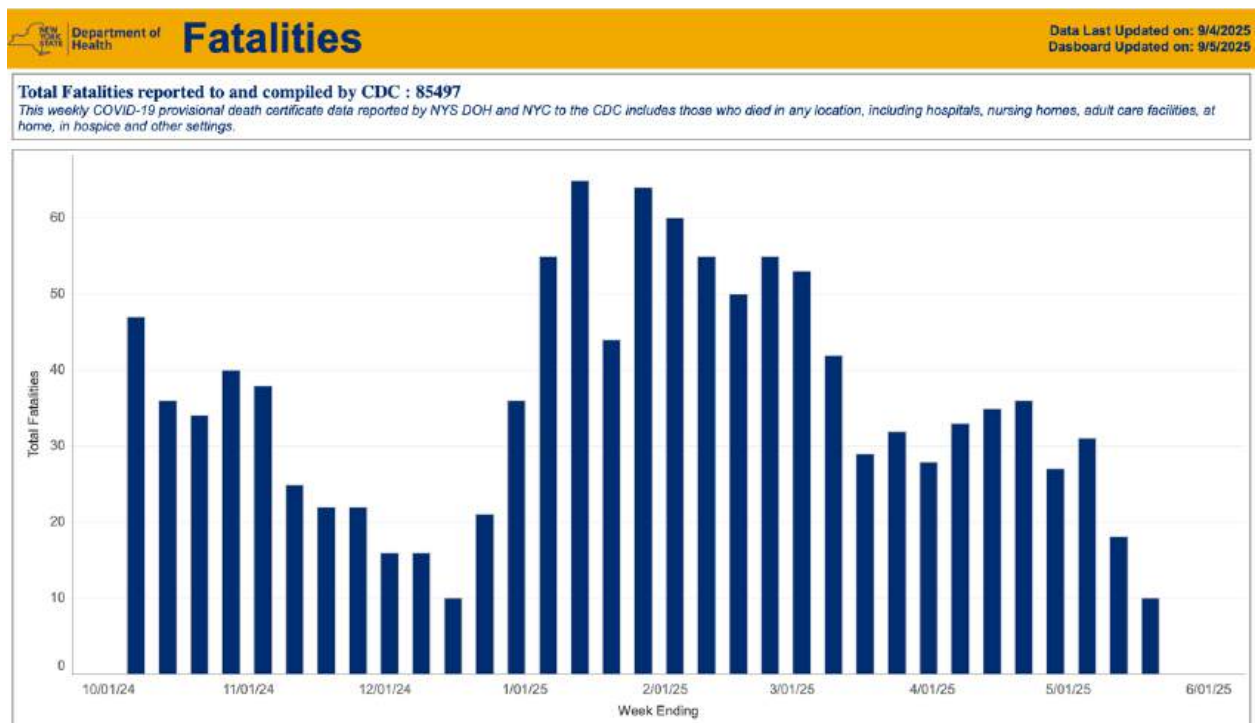
**For more information please click [here](#)**

**NYS COVID-19 Monitoring Dashboard**

Use this link to view the State's updated [COVID-19 Hub](#).

**NYS COVID-19 Fatalities Tracker**

Below we have included the Fatalities Tracker with the webpage where updated numbers can be found throughout the week linked [here](#).



### **Helpful Links and Resources**

**[Empire State Development Tariff Resource Guide](#)**

**[Eliminating Distractions In Schools Resource](#)**

**[RMS Final Budget Tax/Revenue Table](#)**

**[RMS SFY 2025-26 Final Budget H/MH Summary](#)**

**[Center for Disease Control and Prevention](#)**

**[Department of Financial Services information and resources](#)**

**[New York COVID-19 Vaccine Information Page](#)**

**Department of Health**

**<https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/home>**

**[COVID-19 Guidance for Medicaid Providers](#)**

**Office of Mental Health**

**<https://omh.ny.gov/omhweb/covid-19-resources.html>**

**OPWDD**

**<https://opwdd.ny.gov/coronavirus-guidance>**

**State Education Department**

**<http://www.op.nysed.gov/COVID-19.html>**

**NYS Department of Labor**

**<https://dol.ny.gov/>**