

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



### **Capitol Pressroom Interview With Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins**

Earlier this week Senate Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins was interviewed on Capitol Pressroom we have provided a summary of the interview below.

Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins covered a number of areas during her interview. She began the interview discussing issues in the budget process that have arisen over criminal justice changes the last few years, and the statutes governing 16 and 17-year-olds charged with crimes (known as the Raise the Age law) being discussed right now, she noted she doesn't know whether it will be in the budget. However, she reminded listeners that New York was one of only two states that were still prosecuting 16- and 17-year-olds as adults when that law took effect. She also noted that it's important to realize that young people who are accused of egregious crimes can still be tried as adults. Asked about the Raise the Age program, she urged New York City, despite not fitting neatly into the structure and never having applied, to apply because they can then ask for a waiver and be able to take advantage of resources that come with this program (age-appropriate interventions, treatment, and support such as mental health, counseling, job training. She shared that it will certainly be a priority of the Senate Democrats in the new year to prioritize

humanity, justice and safety when addressing this issue and ensure that consistent money for this program is going out the door so they can provide alternative venues to house 16- and 17-year-olds.

Moving on to Zohran Mamdani's major victory winning the New York City mayoral election, she stated that her advice to him is to keep being his authentic self and that he should talk to everyone and represent everyone. He ultimately got as far as he got because of that, and was elected because of his focus on affordability, and she feels as long as he stays on that he'll be fine. While his vision is much bigger than the people that came before him, something that she noted that he recognizes and understands because he's been in Albany, she feels that the Governor, Assembly Speaker Heastie, and herself all are prioritizing affordability so getting to a place where they agree may not be easy but should be doable.

When asked about appointing a new Senate Judiciary Committee Chair, as Senator Hoylman-Sigal has been elected to serve as the Manhattan Borough President, the Majority Leader shared that seniority and being an attorney is important in the decision, but it will be a tough choice because there are so many talented Senators. Beyond that committee, given State Senate rules limits on committee chairs and her role serving for eight consecutive years, she shared that she isn't sure if they'll mix up committee chairs and/or leadership after 2026 and noted that they'll see as next year unravels if they'll revise Senate rules. She did share that she is running for re-election in 2026.

**To listen to the full interview please click [here](#).**

### **Bruce Blakeman Enters New York Governor Race**

Earlier this week according to press reports Nassau County Executive Bruce Blakeman entered the race for New York governor. Blakeman announced his candidacy on "Fox & Friends". Blakeman stated his goals saying, "We want to make it more affordable, we want to make New York safer, and we want to make people in New York happy again."

Blakeman previously told CBS6 in November "We don't have coronations in our party. We're not like the Democratic Party that had a coronation for Kamala Harris. How'd that work out for the Democrats? Competition is a good thing, and I'm going to travel around the state. And if I feel that I'm the best candidate to beat Kathy Hochul and to run the State, then I'm going to jump in. If people are supporting me and they're behind me and they think I'm the best candidate, then I'm going to jump in. If people think that Elise is the best candidate and that she has the best chance to win, then I'm going to support her 100%."

In response to Blakeman's announcement Hochul Campaign Communications Director Sarafina Chitika criticized Blakeman, labeling him a "bootlicker" and accusing him of supporting policies that harm New Yorkers. Chitika said, "Bootlicker Bruce Blakeman

has lost just about every race he's touched — county legislator, comptroller, Congress, even U.S. Senate. There's a reason: just like Donald Trump, he takes money out of New Yorkers' pockets and squeezes working families at every turn. Blakeman raised costs on New Yorkers and cheered on Trump's tariffs like the MAGA fanboy he is — flying all the way to D.C. to applaud higher prices. He gushed that Trump is doing an 'amazing job' by gutting Medicaid and jacking up costs. We're not about to let him turn the governor's mansion into Mar-a-Lago North."

Elise Stefanik, who will be facing Blakeman in the Republican primary for Governor, also had a response to Blakeman's announcement. Bernadette Breslin, spokesperson for Team Stefanik, criticized Blakeman, stating, "Even those in Nassau County who are closest to Bruce Blakeman will tell you that everyone knows Bruce has no shot and is putting his raging ego first and New Yorkers last as he blows up the best opportunity in a generation to Save New York. Bruce's failed statewide electoral record speaks for itself: he has lost every statewide primary and general over the last three decades in smashing fashion. And after a career of colluding with elected Democrats, Blakeman's swan song is choosing to prop up Kathy Hochul. New York voters are smart. Congresswoman Elise Stefanik is beating Blakeman by over 50% in every primary poll including beating him by 20 points on Long Island. She polls as the strongest candidate against Kathy Hochul in the general election. Elise has raised more money in six months than Bruce Blakeman has raised in his entire 30 year political career. He has no support from Republican or Conservative voters or party apparatus. Blakeman was discouraged from running at the highest levels so as not to jeopardize Republicans' chances. It is unfortunate that he is putting his ego first to help prop up Kathy Hochul."

Both Blakeman and Stefanik now frame themselves as candidates who could appeal to moderate Democrats as well as Republicans, even though both have adopted the political rhetoric of Trump, who remains unpopular in New York. We will continue to keep you updated as the race for Governor unfolds.

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

### **Governor Hochul Announces Senior Administration Appointments**

Earlier this week Governor Hochul announced she is nominating Director of State Operations Kathryn Garcia as the next Executive Director of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. In addition, Governor Hochul announced that she will name Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Operations Commissioner Jackie Bray as the new Director of State Operations.

"I have long believed that my greatest talent is finding talent, and I am fortunate to have two of New York's most talented public servants as my Director of State Operations. I am incredibly grateful to have had Kathryn Garcia serve in that role for more than four years, during which time she helped us transform New York for the better," Governor

Hochul said. “From the Gateway Tunnel to Micron, the Interborough Express to our Nuclear Moonshot, Kathryn helped us launch and advance generational infrastructure projects and rebuild our economy following the pandemic with an eye toward the future. I am thankful she will continue serving the people of New York as Executive Director of the Port Authority, where she will help us continue to advance a regional economy that keeps us the global leader in job creation and growth.”

"Kathryn leaves big shoes to fill, but New Yorkers could not ask for a better leader to step into this critical role than Jackie Bray," Governor Hochul continued. "As Commissioner of the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services, Jackie has helped lead the State's emergency management response through extreme weather, infectious disease outbreaks and threats to our public safety. Her experience coordinating interagency operations makes her the right leader to continue delivering the government that New Yorkers deserve. And in her time serving as acting policy director, she helped us to design and implement some of our most important initiatives, including delivering financial relief to millions of New Yorkers and getting cell phones out of our classrooms."

Kathryn Garcia said, "It has been the honor of a lifetime to serve the first female Governor as her Director of State Operations and Infrastructure. I'm enormously proud of what we have accomplished over the last four years: launching the largest infrastructure project in modern history with the Gateway Development Commission; reducing traffic and generating critical funding for the MTA through congestion pricing; and advancing the I-81 Viaduct project to reunite Syracuse's Southside. I know Jackie Bray will bring expert leadership to the team as she steps into the Director role, and I look forward to continuing to serve Governor Hochul and New Yorkers as Executive Director of the Port Authority."

Jackie Bray said, "I am incredibly grateful to Governor Hochul for the opportunity to serve the people of New York as Director of State Operations. For the last four years I have had the honor of supporting the Governor's vision for a New York that is safe, affordable and truly works for all families. Kathryn Garcia has been a boss, mentor and friend, and I am humbled to step into this role that she has performed so admirably. We will continue to deliver real and measurable results that improve the lives of New Yorkers in every corner of the state."

Outgoing Port Authority Executive Director Rick Cotton said, "Governor Hochul's nomination of Kathryn Garcia as the next Executive Director of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey is a superb choice. I have worked closely with Kathryn for many years. She has deep knowledge of city and state government combined with extraordinary insight and judgment and a collaborative spirit. I could not imagine a government executive better suited to advance the Port Authority's standards of world-class infrastructure and get things done."

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

### **Comptroller DiNapoli Released A Report On NYC Health + Hospitals As They Confront The Tough Fiscal Outlook As Washington Moves To Cut Health Care Spending**

Earlier this week the NYS Comptroller DiNapoli released a [report](#) on New York City Health + Hospitals (H+H) that, according to the report, will see pressure on key sources of revenue as Medicaid and low-income patients that rely on federal support lose health insurance, while reimbursement rates for health care programs are cut by Washington, making it harder for the largest public health system in the country to reach its financial goals.

“Federal legislation and regulatory changes — and how the state reacts — could significantly alter the level of support H+H receives,” DiNapoli said. “Cuts in reimbursement rates and payment delays across Medicaid, the state’s Essential Plan and Medicare will hurt the agency’s bottom line, even as a growing uninsured population is likely to push more patients into its facilities. As that happens, H+H may be forced to revisit its cost-cutting plans, leading to difficult decisions about the services it provides.”

H+H provides health care through 11 acute care hospitals, five post-acute care (i.e., skilled nursing) facilities and over 30 patient care locations in the city’s five boroughs. It provides health and mental health services to a large portion of city residents that receive subsidized care through Medicaid, Medicare and the Essential Plan, the New York state free or low-cost insurance plan for adults with low incomes who do not qualify for federal Medicaid.

The agency faced structural budget challenges prior to the pandemic, including the declining use of services, reduced federal funding and a large share of patients without health insurance. In 2016, the city and H+H implemented a Transformation Plan, renamed in city fiscal year (FY) 2022 as Strategic Initiatives, to address recurring deficits and stabilize H+H’s financial situation.

H+H continues to face fiscal challenges as a safety net institution, including Medicaid and Medicare reimbursement rates that don’t cover costs for low-income patients. In FY 2025, Medicare and Medicaid patients made up 84% of all H+H hospital discharges and 62% of all outpatient visits.

DiNapoli’s report found that H+H targeted \$2.2 billion in savings from strategic initiatives for FY 2024 but achieved just over \$1.1 billion. Most of this (96%) came by improved billing, coding and documentation practices, renegotiating higher rates with managed care providers, attracting new and retaining current patients, receiving additional supplemental Medicaid payments and increasing efficiencies.

Supplemental Medicaid payments are made to providers that provide care to Medicaid and uninsured patients and are subject to changes in federal, state and local policy choices. H+H actively pursues supplemental Medicaid payments such as Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH), Upper Payment Limit (UPL) and UPL conversion payments to help supplement Medicaid base payment rates that fall short of the costs of providing care to uninsured patients. These payments are a volatile source of revenue as they require ongoing approvals and depend on the annual state and federal budget process that can result in revised and delayed payments.

H+H's Preliminary FY 2025 Plan released in February 2024 anticipated the receipt of \$1.1 billion in UPL revenue. However, by the time H+H finalized revenue and expenses for FY 2024, it had only achieved \$170 million of what it anticipated receiving in February 2024. H+H revised the amount of UPL revenue it expected to receive and pushed the anticipated receipt of these funds to FY 2025.

It had planned to reduce costs by consolidating consultants and departments, centralizing some services, and implementing more efficient lab practices. But those initiatives generated only \$45 million in savings, 4% of the total savings achieved in FY 2024.

By the time H+H released its February 2025 Plan, it lowered its strategic initiative revenue targets by approximately \$556 million in FY 2025, \$412 million in FY 2026, \$480 million in FY 2027 and \$549 million in FY 2028, although H+H has suggested it still anticipates it will receive some portion of these funds.

The February 2025 Plan also removed an average of \$116 million annually from an undefined strategic initiative, as well as cost savings tied to restructuring, service cuts and department consolidations that were valued at \$90 million in FY 2025 and rising to \$420 million by FY 2028. Because of improved billing, coding and documentation practices and additional revenue from supplemental payments, particularly by New York City, H+H has not yet had to move forward with any major restructuring.

In May 2025, the city and H+H released the H+H FY 2026 Executive Financial Plan, which reflects total strategic initiative savings of \$1.5 billion in FY 2025, \$939 million in FY 2026 and an average of \$2.4 billion annually in FY 2027 through FY 2029. The success of this plan is reliant on the anticipated receipt of UPL revenue, funded with 50% federal and 50% city funds, which the city has budgeted for in its financial plan.

DiNapoli's report finds several areas of risk for H+H in the next few years. New federal law (H.R.1) imposes community engagement or work requirements and more frequent eligibility determinations for certain non-disabled adult Medicaid enrollees. This is expected to result in fewer people becoming eligible and maintaining eligibility for Medicaid. The law also redefines eligibility for legally residing noncitizens to access

Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program and Medicare, as well as subsidized coverage through the state's health care marketplace, which includes the Essential Plan.

As of September 2025, the NYC Department of Social Services estimated that 950,000 individuals in the city will lose coverage (800,000 from Medicaid and 150,000 from the Essential Plan). H+H is expected to see an increase in uninsured residents using H+H facilities.

Federal DSH cuts were originally scheduled to be implemented in federal fiscal year 2014 but were repeatedly delayed by federal legislation until October 2025. Without federal action to further delay these cuts, hospitals will bear their impact, with further cuts scheduled in federal fiscal years 2027 and 2028. H+H has reflected the federal DSH cuts into its financial plans at up to \$622 million.

The state fiscal year (SFY) 2024-25 Enacted Budget included a reduction of \$57 million annually in funding designated to offset some of H+H's costs for providing care to Medicaid and uninsured patients. The total impact to H+H is \$114 million annually, inclusive of the federal matching rate.

Since the release of its May 2025 Plan, the U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services approved the state's proposal for H+H to receive state directed payments that are higher than H+H has budgeted for, providing it with some financial relief in the short term. Whether H+H will continue to receive approvals for these payments over the next several years is uncertain.

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

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

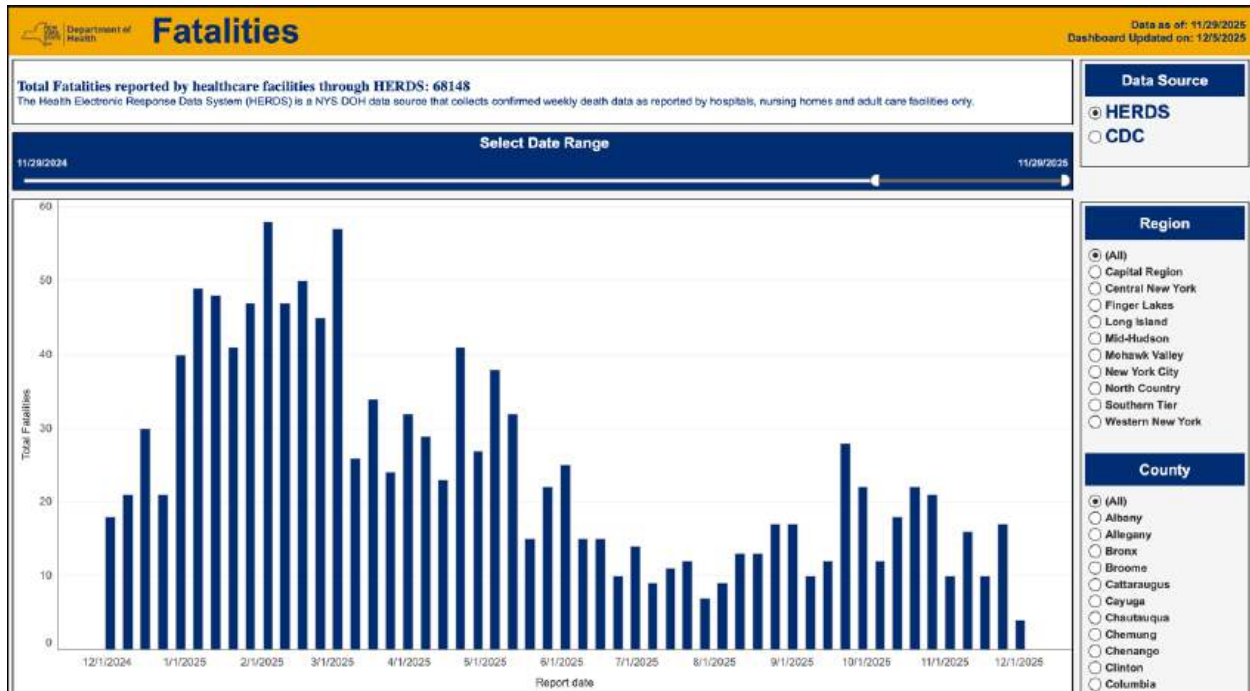
### **NYS COVID-19 Monitoring Dashboard**

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/>