

Youth Boarding in Hospitals (A7603/S7978)

Giving Children the Care They Need, When and Where They Need It

October 2025

The Need

Children with complex intellectual and developmental disabilities and behavioral, mental health or medical needs are being **hospitalized** longer than medically necessary and/or their families are surrendering them to **foster care** so they can receive care their families cannot otherwise access.

The Solutions

New York needs to: (1) ensure OPWDD, OCFS and OMH work together so children can access residential and community-based services, (2) consistently track and report on the number of children boarding in hospitals, and (3) adequately fund the Council on Children and Families to facilitate multi-system care coordination.

During a 3 month period¹

52 NY children

Experienced a “delayed discharge” from the hospital or emergency department due to issues such as lack of available care or residential options in the community, payment issues, legal barriers, and conflicting state regulations



This resulted in

5,110 days

of medically unnecessary in-patient hospitalization

408 days

of medically unnecessary emergency department stays



Over 1 year we can expect

208 NY children

to experience unnecessary hospital stays totaling

20,440

in-patient days

and

1,632 ED days

The average cost per child or adult with complex care discharge delays is **\$168,000** for in-patient care and **\$18,000** for emergency department care.¹This does not include costs related to out-of-state residential placement of children with I/DD complex care needs when there are no beds available in NYS. A current case of out-of-state care is costing a WNY county **\$455,606** per year for the care and education of one child.

¹ The Scope of Complex Case Discharge Delays in New York State, Healthcare Association of New York State, 2023

Behind every number is a child and a family...



“It’s been traumatic navigating a system that often punishes families instead of supporting them.”



“The system has failed us, and now my son faces an uncertain future, likely not finishing high school.”



“We constantly search for staff to help care for our son. It feels like we’re always starting from scratch.”

“It’s heartbreaking to see my son who has severe autism struggle without the help he needs to thrive in his community and at home.”

Support A7603/S7978



Upon referral to the Council on Children and Families Interagency Resolution Unit, an **evaluation and diagnostic study** shall be completed within 72 hours and **placement or services** effectuated within 5 business days of the evaluation



Create a confidential, online data portal to help state, local, and voluntary agencies with **coordination** of residential and community-based services



Require a **report to the Governor and legislature** every 6 months on the status of children who are boarding in hospitals, awaiting discharge to an appropriate residential program or community service



Fund \$25 million to the **Council on Children and Families** for the online data portal, staffing of the Interagency Resolution Unit, diagnostic services, and multi-system care coordination