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THIS WEEK IN NEW YORK

COVERING NEW YORK & CITY GOVERNMENT

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"Obstacles don't define us. Rather, it is the unparalleled courage and character of us that defines us as a people. So my confidence in the future is steeped in our glorious past - in the face of adversity, we always persist. We persevere, we prevail." Governor Kathy Hochul

In The News-New York State



NY Enacts Provider Network Adequacy Standards for Behavioral Health Services

New behavioral health service [network adequacy regulations](#) adopted this week will entitle New Yorkers to an initial appointment for behavioral health care within 10 business days of the request, or seven calendar days following hospital discharge.

Under the regulations adopted by the New York State Department of Financial Services and State Department of Health, insurers unable to meet these timeframes will have to offer out-of-network mental health or substance use disorder coverage without increasing the cost for the consumer. [The regulations go into effect July 1st.](#)

"New Yorkers deserve a speedy and effective process to receive the services they need," Governor Hochul explained. "The regulations...standardize wait times, allow for same cost-sharing and update directories — providing individuals more access to mental health and substance use disorder care statewide."

The DFS regulation, which applies to commercial health insurance plans, takes effect on July 1, 2025. Additionally, DOH has proposed an [identical regulation](#) for HMOs — including Medicaid managed care plans, child health plus and the essential plan. This regulation also goes into effect on July 1, 2025.

The specifics of the regulations include:

- **Standard Wait Times:** Initial appointment time of 10 business days or less, and other appointment wait time standards for insurers for behavioral health services.
- **Same Cost-Sharing:** Requirements for insurers to assist consumers in accessing in-network providers within those standards. When an in-network provider is not available within those standards, the regulation will require insurers to allow access to an out-of-network provider who can meet those standards, at the in-network cost-sharing rate.

- **Updated Directories:** Specific information to be included in provider directories, including provider affiliations with facilities and restrictions on a provider's scope of services, such as age of patients or mental health conditions treated.
- **Insurer Compliance:** Insurers and managed care organizations must now submit to DFS and DOH an annual certification regarding an insurer's access plan that must include collection of data and monitoring of its behavioral health network.



Tentative Deal Reached to End the NYS Correction Officer Strike

Governor Kathy Hochul announced an agreement late Thursday to end a wildcat strike that spread across the New York State prison system.

“My top priority is the safety of all New Yorkers, and for the past 11 days, I have deployed every possible State resource to protect the well-being of correction officers, the incarcerated population and local communities across New York,” Governor Hochul explained. “Working with a mediator, we have reached a consent award to address many of the concerns raised by correction officers, put DOCCS back on the path to safe operations, respect the rights of incarcerated individuals and prevent future unsanctioned work stoppages. I have the utmost respect and gratitude for the correction officers, civilian DOCCS employees, National Guard personnel and other staff who have done their absolute best to maintain order in our correctional facilities during this challenging period.”

Governor Hochul said the State and the New York State Correctional Officers and Police Benevolent Association agreed to binding terms after four days of mediation talks. Workers must return to work by Saturday to avoid being disciplined for striking, according to mediator Martin Scheinman in a [seven-page memo](#) detailing the consent award.

The deal includes changes to address staffing shortages, provisions to minimize mandatory 24-hour overtime shifts, and the parties agreed to meet and discuss the definitions of assault for tracking assaults, with respect to the HALT Act, the consent award detailed:

The Commissioner of DOCCS will exercise his existing discretion under the HALT Act and continue the temporary suspension of the programming elements of the HALT Act for 90 days from the date of the Consent Award due to the ongoing emergency and exigent circumstances that exist within each facility due to the illegal strike and the significant staffing deficit that existed prior to the illegal strike. After 30 days from the date of the Consent Award, the Commissioner of DOCCS will begin to evaluate the operations, safety, and security of our facilities relative to staffing levels and determine whether re-instituting the suspended elements of HALT would create an unreasonable risk to the safety and security of the incarcerated individuals and staff. This analysis will be done on a facility-by-facility basis and will be ongoing.

In The News-New York City



Comptroller DiNapoli: As NYC Budget Stabilizes, New Risks Emerge

Federal Uncertainty Requires Cautious Fiscal Preparation

New York City increased its expectations for its surplus in fiscal year (FY) 2025 to \$2.34 billion, largely as a result of stronger tax revenue projections and a reduction in the cost of providing services to asylum seekers, which will help balance its \$116.9 billion FY 2026 budget, according to [a report released](#) by State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli.

“Improved fiscal conditions have helped New York City shore up its finances and close a budget gap for the coming fiscal year,” Comptroller DiNapoli said. “However, given recent uncertainty created by federal fiscal and economic policy choices, the city should be preparing for scenarios where all of its resources -- federal, state, and local -- may be impacted. One way to mitigate disruptions would be to further build reserve levels and clarify how these resources may be used by developing formal policies around the accumulation and uses of these funds.”

Comptroller DiNapoli’s report notes the city faces heightened fiscal uncertainty pending the outcome of upcoming federal budget negotiations and the result of the comprehensive federal assistance funding review being conducted by the new administration to identify grant programs which are implicated by the President’s recent executive actions.

While federal receipts account for just 6.4% (\$7.4 billion) of the city’s FY 2026 operating budget, significantly more federal funding flows through the state to provide services, including more than \$30 billion in Medicaid expenditures, or directly to New York City residents, such as Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program benefits and Pell Grants.

Since budget adoption, the city has updated its FY 2025-26 projections to include higher revenues, asylum seeker savings and lower-than-expected collective bargaining costs. In addition, a \$1.4 billion drawdown of contingency reserves helped close the \$5.5 billion gap for FY 2026 that was projected at the beginning of the current year.

The Comptroller questioned the City’s practice of underbudgeting certain spending items as it creates risks to the city’s financial plan. For example, in FY 2025, the city added \$3.7 billion to address fiscal needs that arose since the beginning of the fiscal year, much of which has gone towards nondiscretionary spending, including public assistance, rental assistance, special education services, charter school funding and subsidies for the Metropolitan Transportation Authority. He noted that the City has added only \$831 million for new agency needs in FY 2026, suggesting it will again have to identify additional resources to fund these expenses next year.

Comptroller DiNapoli asserted the city should be realistic in its projection of spending on these items to improve transparency. Increased transparency, the Comptroller said, should inform a realistic discussion of the city's fiscal position and its ability to fund discretionary programs the city is not obligated to provide but which may be popular.



Bills Passed by the Council

Introduction 9-B, sponsored by Deputy Speaker Diana Ayala -- Requires ACS to provide information about where parents and guardians can access legal services after ACS makes contact with them for the first time, at the onset of an ACS child protective investigation, or an ACS child protective response.

Introduction 565-A, sponsored by Council Member Gale A. Brewer -- Requires the Campaign Finance Board, in consultation with the Board of Elections (BOE) and the Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence (ENDGBV), to develop guidance on the procedures under the New York State Election Law for making a voter record confidential and for voting by special ballot.

Introduction 1061-A, sponsored by Council Member Farah Louis -- Amends the Department of Correction's (DOC) semi-annual reports on alleged incidents and investigations of sexual harassment and abuse to require a unique identification number for each alleged incident. It would also require DOC to provide a justification for not reporting any substantiated allegations to a District Attorney's office.

Introduction 498-A, sponsored by Council Member Shaun Abreu -- Requires the Department of Sanitation (DSNY) to collect organic waste from community gardens upon request. Community gardens would be able to make such requests through an online application portal.

Introduction 1126-A, sponsored by Council Member Yusef Salaam -- Requires DSNY, or another administering agency, to distribute official NYC waste bins to owners of eligible buildings. Eligible buildings include those with up to two dwelling units where the building owner is enrolled in a New York School Tax Relief (STAR) or Enhanced STAR tax benefit program.

Introduction 1092-A, sponsored by Council Member Crystal Hudson -- Requires the Department for the Aging (DFTA), in consultation with the New York City Office of Technology and Innovation (OTI) and the Department of Consumer and Worker Protection (DCWP), to develop informational materials to educate older adults about internet scams, phone scams, and phishing scams, and provide quarterly guidance to older adult centers about emerging scams.

Introduction 1101-A, sponsored by Council Member Yusef Salaam -- Requires the New York City Police Department (NYPD) to publish information on its website to help the public understand what constitutes identity theft and how to report alleged identity theft.

Introduction 794-A, sponsored by Council Member Althea V. Stevens -- Requires that appointments or recommendations for youth board members be made with best efforts to ensure that appointees have demonstrated relevant experience in the area of youth welfare. Additionally, this bill would require at least three members of the board be between the ages of 16-24, to ensure actual youth representation.

Briefs

Governor Hochul Announces Three State Agency Commissioner Nominees

Governor Kathy Hochul this week announced the nominations of three New York State agency commissioners: Denise Miranda as Commissioner of the State Division of Human Rights (DHR); Amanda Lefton as Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC); and Willow Baer as Commissioner of the State Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD). The nominations are subject to State Senate confirmation.

Denise Miranda

During her first year at the DHR, Ms. Miranda initiated a complete overhaul of the Division's intake operations, increased staffing by 40 percent in the first six months, expanded education and outreach initiatives and engaged in wholesale organizational change.

Prior to DHR, Acting Commissioner Miranda served as the Executive Director of the New York State Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs for seven years. She oversaw the agency's operations, which included investigations into abuse and neglect, criminal prosecutions, and administrative disciplinary proceedings. Under her leadership, the Justice Center managed the care of over one million individuals, with a workforce of more than 425 employees and a \$41 million operating budget.

Amanda Lefton

Amanda Lefton's career spans the public and private sectors, including previously serving as the Director of the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) within the Department of the Interior. Under her leadership, BOEM developed and implemented the federal offshore wind program.

Prior to her role as BOEM Director, Lefton served as the First Assistant Secretary for Energy and Environment for New York, where she led the State's environmental and climate initiatives overseeing a portfolio of executive agencies including the DEC. She has also worked for The Nature Conservancy in New York as the Deputy Policy Director and climate mitigation lead, the Rochester Regional Joint Board of Workers United and the New York State Assembly and New York State Senate.

Willow Baer

Prior to becoming Acting Commissioner, Willow served as OPWDD's Executive Deputy Commissioner and oversaw the agency's operational management, including planning, fiscal planning and oversight, and policy development. She was also responsible for oversight of agency staff in a broad range of capacities, including direct care support, clinical and medical staff in residential and non-residential settings, maintenance and operations.

Willow has served twice as Assistant Counsel to Governor Kathy Hochul, overseeing legal priorities and legislation across the fields of Human Services and Mental Hygiene. Additionally, Willow previously served as General Counsel to OPWDD, General Counsel and Deputy Commissioner for the Office of Children & Family Services, and as Counsel to the NYS Justice Center.

New York Releases Request for Proposals to Transform Hell's Kitchen Site Near Intrepid Museum Into Mixed-Use Development

The State Empire State Development Corporation has issued a Request for Proposals for the redevelopment of 621 West 45th Street, a state-owned parcel in the Hell's Kitchen neighborhood of Manhattan. The site, currently utilized as a surface parking lot, spans approximately 50,584 square feet along the east blockfront of Twelfth Avenue between West 45th and West 46th Streets.

Applicants can [view the Request for Proposals document here](#) and submit a proposal to Empire State Development by May 15, 2025 at 2:00 p.m. ET.

“This is an extraordinary opportunity to transform a state-owned asset into a thriving residential and mixed-use development that meets the needs of New Yorkers while enhancing the vibrancy and diversity of the Hell's Kitchen neighborhood,” Empire State Development President, CEO and Commissioner Hope Knight said. “By repurposing this underutilized site, we can deliver affordable housing, create engaging public spaces, and catalyze economic growth in one of Manhattan's most dynamic communities. We look forward to reviewing innovative proposals that will bring this vision to life and make a lasting, positive impact on the community.”

The Request for Proposals (RFP) outlines key development objectives designed to maximize the site's potential and ensure a transformative impact on the community. These include:

- A minimum of 25 percent on-site affordable housing units, contributing to inclusive and accessible living opportunities in the neighborhood.
- A mix of residential and commercial spaces that reflect the area's needs and character, providing amenities and services to support residents and enliven the streetscape.
- Incorporation of community spaces to foster a sense of belonging and social interaction among residents and visitors.
- Preservation of the Intrepid Museum's parking and pedestrian bridge access rights, ensuring seamless integration with existing cultural and recreational assets.
- Building form and facades designed to create a vibrant and varied streetscape, enhancing the visual appeal and walkability of the neighborhood.

NY Will Not Comply with Federal Government's Congestion Pricing Termination

Governor Kathy Hochul this week pledged to continue New York City's Central Business Tolling District Program in the face of federal termination.

“We're not done. We are in court, Governor Hochul asserted. “We have said that, you may have asked for — orderly cessation was the phrase that came in the letter to us — orderly cessation. I will propose something in the alternative: orderly resistance, orderly resistance. We will keep standing up for New Yorkers, reducing traffic, air quality is going to continue improving.”

Federal Highway Administration (FHA) Executive Director Gloria Shepherd wrote in a [letter](#) to New York state and city officials dated February 20th, including the NYS Department of Transportation NYSDOT) as well as the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, that the toll program must end on March 21st.

“Accordingly, NYSDOT and its project sponsors must cease the collection of tolls on federal-aid highways in the CBDTP area by March 21, 2025,” the letter states. “Please work with Rick Marquis, the FHWA’s New York Division Administrator, to provide the necessary details and updates regarding the cessation of toll operations.”

Mayor Adams Announces Closure of Roosevelt Hotel Asylum Seeker Humanitarian Relief and Arrival Center

New York City Mayor Eric Adams this week announced the forthcoming closure of both the Asylum Seeker Arrival Center and Humanitarian Emergency Response and Relief Center located at The Roosevelt Hotel.

According to the Mayor, the site has been instrumental in supporting hundreds of thousands of migrants on their journeys toward achieving self-sufficiency in the United States. Opened in May 2023, the facility has functioned as a centralized intake center for newly arriving asylum seekers. The site has provided a variety of supportive services to migrants, including legal assistance, medical care, and reconnection services, as well as served as a humanitarian relief center for families with children.

Out of the more than 232,000 migrants that have come into the city’s care since the spring of 2022, more than 173,000 registrations were completed at The Roosevelt Hotel between May 2023 and February 2025.

In recent months, the average number of registrants has decreased to approximately 350 per week. The Administration indicated that going forward, these intake functions and supportive services will now be integrated into other areas of the system.

Governor Hochul to Federal Workers: Here in New York, We Say ‘You’re Hired’

Governor Kathy Hochul this week launched a new “You’re Hired” initiative to recruit public sector workers into State service. This initiative comes as the Trump Administration reviews the federal workforce.

“Whatever your skills, we value public service,” Governor Hochul said. “[Check out potential jobs at ny.gov/wewantyou](https://ny.gov/wewantyou). Come join our New York State family.”

To kick off this initiative, Governor Hochul released a [video message](#) to invite federal workers to join the New York State workforce.

“Public service is a noble calling, and we’re looking for the best and brightest to come work for New York State,” New York State Department of Civil Service Commissioner and Civil Service Commission President Timothy Hogue said. “Under Governor Hochul’s leadership, we have been working hard to retain and recruit the next generation of employees and servant-leaders.”

Coming Up

New York State

Monday, March 3rd

Senate Insurance Committee Meeting, 124 State Capital, 11:30 a.m.

Senate Housing, Construction and Community Development Committee Meeting, 511 Legislative Office Building, 11:30 a.m.

Senate Labor Committee Meeting, 308 Legislative Office Building, 11:45 a.m.

New York State Assembly Session, Assembly Chamber – Capitol Building, 2 p.m.

New York State Senate Session, Senate Chamber – Capitol Building, 3 p.m.

Tuesday, March 5th

Senate Aging Committee Meeting, 904 Legislative Office Building, 9 a.m.

Senate Education Committee Meeting, 510 Legislative Office Building, 10 a.m.

Senate Corporations, Authorities and Commissions Committee Meeting, 912 Legislative Office Building, 10:30 a.m.

Senate High Education Committee Meeting, 124 State Capital, 10 30 a.m.

Senate Finance Committee Meeting, 124 State Capital, 11 a.m.

Senate Disabilities Committee Meeting, 708 Legislative Office Building, 11 a.m.

Public Hearing – Senate Standing Committee on Banks

Is There Discrimination in the New York Home Mortgage Banking Industry?

Van Buren Hearing Room A, Legislative Office Building, 11:30 a.m.

Senate Veterans, Homeland Security and Military Affairs Committee Meeting, 123 State Capital, 11:45 a.m.

Senate Agriculture Committee Meeting, 901 Legislative Office Building, 12 p.m.

Senate Health Committee Meeting, 124 CAP, 12 p.m.

New York State Assembly Session, Assembly Chamber – Capitol Building

New York State Senate Session, Senate Chamber – Capitol Building, 3p.m.

Wednesday, March 5th

Senate Mental Health Committee Meeting, 813 Legislative Office Building, 9:30 a.m.

New York State Assembly Session, Assembly Chamber – Capitol Building, tbd.

New York State Senate Session, Senate Chamber – Capitol Building, 11 a.m.

New York City

Wednesday, March 5th

Committee on Finance, Council Chambers – City Hall, 10:30 a.m.

Thursday, March 6th

Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises, 250 Broadway – Committee Room, 16th Floor, 10 a.m.

Committee on Immigration, Council Chambers – City Hall, 10 a.m.

Committee on Hospitals, 250 Broadway – Committee Room, 14th floor, 1 p.m.

Friday, March 7th

Committee on Criminal Justice, Council Chambers – City Hall, 10 a.m.

Committee on Civil and Human Rights, Committee Room – City Hall, 10:30 a.m.

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