

SOMOS to NY: Ask Trump for Medicaid waiver extension

Doctors from SOMOS said Monday that they are urging Albany to call on the Trump administration to extend New York's Medicaid Redesign Team, or MRT, waiver.

SOMOS is a physician-led network that serves 700,000 Medicaid beneficiaries through the state's Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment, or DSRIP, program. Its doctors say the MRT waiver is critical to allowing work that is transforming health care delivery in lower-income communities to continue.

The MRT waiver is an agreement between the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and New York that allows the state to use a managed care delivery system for Medicaid recipients' benefits, SOMOS noted. The waiver creates efficiencies in the Medicaid program and coverage for individuals who otherwise would not have health insurance.

This month SOMOS called on Gov. Andrew Cuomo to work to extend the DSRIP program, which is scheduled to end next year. On Monday the doctors noted that extending the MRT waiver is a "critical step to continue the life-saving program."

SOMOS said its early DSRIP results include reducing preventable hospital readmissions by 36% and preventable emergency room visits by 34%. It said its results show a 47% reduction in preventable behavioral health emergency visits.

"DSRIP is working. However, the work is far from finished—imagine if we had four more years," said Dr. Ramon Tallaj, founder and chairman of SOMOS, in a statement. "To continue this life-changing work, New York needs the extension of the MRT waiver. We join this dialogue today based on the program's merits and our doctors' results." —J.H.