

Good day,

My name is Justin Boogard, and I am the Co-Founder of GoGoGrandparent, an organization dedicated to helping older adults age safely, confidently, and independently in their own homes. Through the Governor's Executive Budget, the Governor has once again demonstrated her strong commitment to helping older New Yorkers live healthier and more independent lives while also being mindful of long term costs to the State.

As New York's senior population continues to grow, the fiscal pressures on Medicaid are becoming increasingly pronounced. According to the New York State Division of the Budget's FY 2027 projections, Medicaid enrollment is expected to reach 6.8 million enrollees by March of 2026. While the Governor has taken meaningful steps to control costs through innovative tools such as the Medicaid Global Cap, overall spending continues to rise, driven largely by increasing long term managed care and nursing home costs.

Since 2019, GoGo Grandparent has partnered with New York State agencies to provide transportation services that help older adults remain independent for longer. Our program allows eligible adults in participating counties to receive up to four free rides per month within their communities through GoGo's transportation network designed specifically for older adults.

In 2024, the program enabled 2,639 older adults across 25 counties to take more than 10,800 rides. In 2025, participation grew to approximately 3,800 older adults in more than 30 counties, resulting in over 23,000 rides. In 2026, we expect demand to increase significantly, as current county allocations are already insufficient to meet the needs of older adults seeking these services.

The program is administered through the New York State Office for the Aging and delivered by County Area Agencies on Aging using existing contracting and oversight mechanisms. The program currently has a waiting list of approximately 24,000 individuals across participating counties.

For the coming fiscal year, a total of \$3.5 million is being requested to support the GoGo transportation program. This funding would more than triple the number of older adults served and would substantially reduce, if not entirely eliminate, the existing waiting list.

The benefits of this investment are clear. By delaying transitions into higher cost institutional care, the program generates meaningful savings for the State. Participant surveys consistently show that GoGo services significantly extend the amount of time individuals are able to live independently at home rather than entering a nursing home. The average annual cost of nursing home care in New York State is approximately \$159,000 per person, a cost largely borne by Medicaid. Preventing even a small number of nursing home placements in a given year allows the program to more than pay for itself.

The program also improves access to health related services. More than 15 percent of trips are for medical appointments or other health related needs. By removing transportation barriers, older adults are better able to access preventive and routine care, which helps reduce costly Medicaid funded emergency room visits and hospitalizations. Improved mobility also leads to reduced reliance on emergency services and a meaningful reduction in social isolation.

The GoGo transportation program directly advances the goals of New York's Master Plan for Aging, particularly its focus on expanding access, strengthening independence, and supporting caregivers. The program broadens access by offering on demand or scheduled rides 24 hours a day, seven days a week, year round, with the ability to book rides by speaking to a live operator using any type of phone. It strengthens independence and supports caregivers by enabling older adults to reach medical appointments, pharmacies, grocery stores, and other essential destinations on their own.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony. I look forward to continuing to work with you to ensure older New Yorkers can remain independent, connected, and supported for as long as possible.