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## Getting New Yorkers To Join Health Home Remains Challenging, Helgerson Says

By Jonathan LaMantia

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As New York state's Medicaid program tries to lower its per-recipient costs through its Health Home program, the challenge has been to track down members and persuade them to enroll in care management services, state Medicaid director Jason Helgerson said at a forum Thursday in Manhattan hosted by the **Citizens Budget Commission**. "This a fairly mobile population who can be very hard to reach," he said. The Health Home program connects people with two or more chronic conditions, HIV/AIDS, or serious mental illness with care managers to coordinate care. When Medicaid recipients are engaged, they have positive results, he said. As of July 2016, 170,000 people were enrolled in Health Home services. Helgerson was responding to a May 2016 Citizens Budget Commission report, which noted the inability to make certain managed-care programs, including the Health Home initiative, mandatory for New Yorkers with intensive medical needs who could benefit from care management. Optional participation is one barrier to lowering per-recipient spending, the fiscal watchdog group said. Providers have tried recruiting people for Health Home while they are waiting for service in emergency rooms, but that approach has generally failed, Helgerson said. "When someone is cold, sick and hungry, sitting in an emergency room, they have very little interest in learning what a Health Home is—that proved not to be an effective strategy," he said. —J.L.