

# Rochester's Seniors Cannot Afford Albany's Long-Term Care Mistakes

*Dan Savitt, President and CEO of VNS Health, March 13, 2026*

New York's long-term care system is dangerously out of balance. Unless Albany acts now, seniors with complex medical needs across Rochester and the Finger Lakes will pay the price.

Today, the state's payment system rewards plans whose members have fewer needs, while plans caring for medically complex seniors struggle to cover the cost of care. Funding is pushed toward lower-acuity enrollment and away from the hardest work: coordinating care for people who rely on consistent, intensive support.

When funding doesn't match need, the consequences are predictable. Plans scale back care management, strain to maintain provider networks, or exit the market entirely. Each time, the result is disruption for people whose lives depend on stability.

You can see what that means in the life of 81-year-old Rochester resident Georgia Johnson. Three years ago, doctors gave her five days to live. Today, she is still here.

Living with chronic heart failure, diabetes, and emphysema, Georgia depends on her daughter, who relocated to Rochester while balancing work and caregiving. Even with family support, Georgia cannot manage alone. Without reliable home care and coordination, her health could quickly spiral into crisis.

Through VNS Health's Managed Long Term Care plan, Georgia works with a local care manager from Elderwood IPA who coordinates her doctors, services, and transportation. That partnership helps her remain in her apartment, avoid repeated hospitalizations, and maintain her independence.

That is what long-term care is supposed to do. But with proposed rate cuts, that stability is at risk.

Decisions being made in Albany will determine whether thousands of medically complex seniors keep the care they rely on or face disruptions that can cause real harm.

When state policy changes led to MLTC closures in the Rochester and Finger Lakes region, VNS Health worked with partners to protect continuity of care for more than 4,000 local residents and 8,600 people across upstate New York.

We are the only 5-star rated plan serving many of the area's most medically complex seniors and people with disabilities and one of just three MLTC plans in Monroe and surrounding counties. When a plan disappears, it is not a line item on a spreadsheet. It is a frail senior losing a trusted aide. It is missed appointments, medication errors, and families scrambling to hold things together.

Our founder, Lillian Wald, who grew up in Rochester and is laid to rest in Mount Hope Cemetery, believed that

vulnerable neighbors deserve care and dignity. That principle still guides our work.

Georgia should not have to fight to age safely in her home. Neither should the thousands of seniors across this region who depend on long-term care every day.

If Albany fails to fix these MLTC funding problems, the consequences will be immediate: more closures, fewer options, and a system that grows weaker where need is greatest. That means higher hospital costs, greater caregiver burnout, and worse outcomes for medically complex seniors.

Legislation has been introduced to correct this imbalance and ensure plans serving the sickest New Yorkers are not penalized for doing so. Lawmakers must include it in the final State Budget.

The choice before Albany is clear: protect medically complex seniors and stabilize long-term care — or accept preventable crises and call it cost savings.

Rochester's seniors cannot afford that mistake.

*Dan Savitt is president and CEO of VNS Health.*

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