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THE BUFFALO NEWS SUNDAY

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BUFFALO NEXT: ENERGY

\$1.1 billion upgrade to keep 'hub of energy' humming



JOSHUA BESSEX, BUFFALO NEWS

Jairo Florez, WNY regional manager for the New York Power Authority, watches a shaft spin from inside one of the hydropower generator units inside the Robert Moses Niagara Power Plant.

Work aims to extend lifespan of vital Niagara Power Project

The Niagara Power Project is in the midst of a \$1.1 billion upgrade, designed to extend the lifespan of one of the nation's largest hydroelectric facilities.



MATT
GLYNN

The modernization and digitization program underscores the importance of the power project to the region and the state.

The Niagara Power Project employs 318 people, but its impact goes far beyond that. On a typical day, the power project generates about 10% of the state's electricity. And the Power Authority's

Western New York hydropower programs are credited with supporting over 35,000 jobs at area companies by providing them with electricity at discounted rates.

Low-cost hydropower is an important selling point for the region to attract and keep companies, a counterpoint to negatives like harsh winter weather and the state's tax climate.

And the upgrades are happening at a time when demand for electricity continues to rise, to power homes and vehicles, as well as data centers and massive manufacturing plants.

Jairo Florez, who oversees the Niagara Power Project as the Power Authority's Western region manager, sees the effect the Lewiston facility has on the area.

Please see **POWER**, Page A6

How Trump's bill will affect health care in New York

1.5 million in state
are projected
to lose coverage

JERRY ZREMSKI
News Washington Bureau Chief

WASHINGTON – President Trump labeled it “the One Big Beautiful Bill Act” but it's also the most comprehensive health care reform legislation passed by Congress since the Affordable Care Act became law in 2010.

But to hear health care experts tell it, the massive bill that congressional Republicans just passed might as well be called the Unaffordable Care Act. Upward of 17 million Americans, including 1.5 million New Yorkers, are projected to lose their health insurance by 2034 because of the bill's changes to Medicaid and Obamacare. That means the health care providers of last resort – hospital emergency rooms – would bear the cost of caring for newly uninsured patients who put off seeking treatment.

It's all led to grave concern

among medical professionals.

“The medical community, I think, is worried,” said Dr. Iris R. Danziger, president of the Medical Society of Erie County. “Will we be able to sustain these sweeping changes – the hospitals, the primary care providers, all physicians in practice? And then there's the impact on our community, and potentially the lives lost because of this.”

The Trump administration, of course, begs to differ.

“The One Big Beautiful Bill protects and strengthens Medicaid for those who rely on it – pregnant women, children, seniors, people with disabilities – while eliminating waste, fraud and abuse,” the White House said in a statement.

One thing critics and supporters of the bill's health care provisions can agree upon, though, is their complexity. So here's a closer look at what those provisions will mean to different groups of people, as well as to hospitals.

Please see **HEALTH CARE**, Page A8

Rubio's State Dept. firings also reduce longtime U.S. values

MICHAEL CROWLEY
New York Times

The Trump administration began firing more than 1,000 State Department employees Friday, as it moves to downsize the federal government's diplomatic arm in what critics say is a risky retreat from America's global engagement.

The layoffs are part of a reorganization plan devised by Secretary of State Marco Rubio, who says his department is too costly, cumbersome and ideological. Continuing President Trump's drive to slash a federal workforce he inherently distrusts, the job cuts will drain the department of expertise and batter the morale of those who remain, critics say.

But the plan also has global implications, veteran diplomats say. It refocuses American diplomacy around Trump's narrow and transactional sense of the national interest while downgrading priorities such as human rights, democracy and refugees. In doing so, critics argue, it undermines a moral purpose that, however imperfectly and inconsistently applied, has been a source of pride for generations of Americans and has distinguished the United States from more cold-blooded global competitors such as Russia and China.

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Shootings, homicides continue to fall

AARON BESECKER
News Staff Reporter

In 2024, the number of people shot in Buffalo was at the lowest point annually since at least 2006. The trend is continuing.

The number of people killed in the first half of 2025 in Buffalo plunged to near the lowest levels seen in nearly two decades, according to a Buffalo News analysis of Buffalo Police Department statistics. And the number of people

shot during the first six months of the year was at the lowest level in at least 14 years.

The decreases in both categories continue a recent trend of falling levels of gun violence in Buffalo and around the country.

Shootings in Buffalo have been falling since the recent high points of 2020 and 2021, when the city averaged about one person shot every day.

In Los Angeles, homicides were

down over the first half of the year by 20%, according to the Los Angeles Times. Killings in Chicago over the same period are in line to be what the Chicago Tribune described as the city's “steepest statistical drop in recent memory.”

The drop is not universal, as some places have seen shootings and homicides rise.

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WEATHER

Breezy, a stray thunderstorm.
High 82, low 68. Details on Page B10



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