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**TREASURER IMPLEMENTS SERIES OF REFORMS:
ANDREWS SENDS CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN TO COMPTROLLER**

LOCKPORT—Niagara County Treasurer Kyle R. Andrews unveiled a package of sweeping reforms today that address concerns identified by a state comptroller's audit of internal controls over the Public Administrator's handling of estate assets prior to Andrews being named to the post in March.

Since being appointed treasurer by the governor, Andrews has spent the past six weeks reviewing procedures in place in the Treasurer's Office and the problems identified by New York State Comptroller Thompas P. DiNapoli in a scathing review of the office's performance of an appointed public administrator of estates function. Andrews issued a corrective action plan to the comptroller's office by mail late last week, and revealed the plan's contents this morning.

"These new procedures – which are effective immediately – aim to bolster transparency and protect the public trust," Andrews said. "We are not only responding to the Comptroller's audit, but ushering in a new generation of open and transparent practices to the Public Administrator function in Niagara County."

The most notable facet of Andrews's plan is a new rule barring "[a]ny vendor related to the Administrator or any employee of the Treasurer's Office" from receiving work issued by the Treasurer's Office for public administrator work.

"This plan addresses one point, above all others: restoring the public's confidence and trust in the Niagara County Treasurer's Office," Andrews said on releasing the text of his letter to DiNapoli's office. "We must be held to a higher standard, and on my watch, we will."

The corrective action plan also spells out procedures for documenting the property of county residents that die without wills, controlling access to physical estates, and a requirement that items deemed to have high financial value be professionally appraised.

Andrews also took aim at the selection and billing of outside vendors, announcing that vendors performing work for the Public Administrator would now be required to provide detailed billing for services rendered and that attorneys, appraisers, realtors, and other professionals must be selected from an approved list of outside vendors.

"With these reforms, we are choosing to do the hard right over the easy wrong," Andrews said. "Every recommendation we are making today will mean more work, and tougher standards, but it will also mean that the public can trust fully in this office again."

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