

WEATHER

High **34**
Low **21**

Today's forecast

A wintry chill in the air, and nature could serve up a few flakes to boot.

Details/B2



GAME DAY

Jets roll over Packers • Cowboys kick past Giants/D1,5

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Nursing homes welcome mergers

Administrators agree with state panel's recommendations as role of facilities changes

By **CATHLEEN F. CROWLEY**
Staff writer

Edna Van Volkenbur collapsed after walking up six steps and fell to the floor of her apartment, unconscious. Her heart stopped beating for 11 minutes.

At 82 years old, Van Volkenbur suffers from a chronic lung disease that strains her heart. She would have been a candidate for a nursing home two decades ago. Instead, Van Volkenbur rehabilitated for a month at Northwoods at Hilltop, a Niskayuna nursing home, and returned home. An aide visits her Saratoga County home to wash her laundry and vacuum, but otherwise Van Volkenbur takes care of herself.

The role of nursing homes has changed.

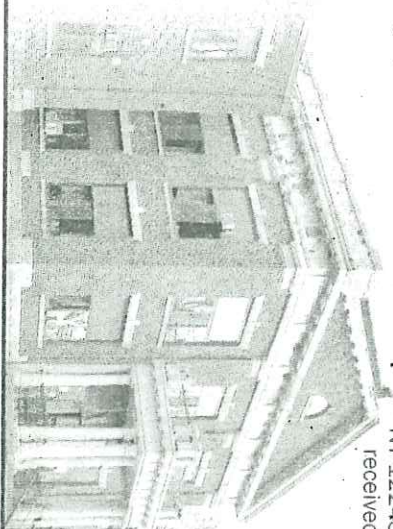
The state Commission on Health Care Facilities in the 21st Century released a report last week that recommended eliminating 3,068 nursing home beds while expanding such community-based services as assisted living, day care for the elderly and home visits.

Nursing home leaders, even some of those targeted for downsizing, said the commission's suggestions are wise.

Please see **NURSING A8** ▶

Speak out on homes

To comment on the recommendations of the Commission on Health Care Facilities in the 21st Century, write to HealthHearing@assnny.us or to 822 Legislative Office Building, Albany, N.Y. 12248. Comments received by Dec. 8.



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