



Healthcare Association  
of New York State

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## **SIENA POLL: NEW YORKERS OVERWHELMINGLY OPPOSE HEALTH CARE CUTS**

### **Two-Thirds of New Yorkers Would Rather Pay Higher Taxes Than See Health Care Budget Cuts**

#### **Executive Budget Plan Out of Step with Majority of New Yorkers**

ALBANY, N.Y. — Nearly two-thirds of New Yorkers would rather see their taxes raised than close the state budget deficit by cutting health care or education, according to a recent survey of registered voters conducted by the Siena Research Institute on behalf of the Healthcare Association of New York State (HANYS). By a margin of 79% to 17%, New Yorkers oppose state budget policies that cut funding for Medicaid, and by an even larger margin (84% to 13%), they oppose budget actions that cut spending for health care.

On December 16, Governor Paterson unveiled his 2009-2010 Executive Budget proposal, which included more than \$2.5 billion in health care cuts and taxes, and hundreds of millions more in education cuts.

“The Siena polling data show that the public, by a solid majority, disagrees with the Governor’s plan to make such huge cuts to health care services,” said Daniel Sisto, President of HANYS. “Voters clearly know the value of their local health care providers and they don’t want anyone, not even the Governor, to imperil their access to care for any reason.”

Survey participants were told the state faces a \$2 billion deficit in the current fiscal year and a \$12 billion deficit in the next fiscal year. They were told that health care accounts for the largest portion of the state budget and education the second largest portion. They were then given four choices and asked which best describes how they feel. Sixteen percent said cut spending to both health care and education. One in ten voters said cut spending to education but not health care, while 6% said cut spending to health care but not education. The vast majority (63%), however, said New York should not cut spending to either health care or education, even if it means raising taxes.

“A strong majority of voters from every region of the state and from every political party—including 56% of Republicans—said they do not want to see cuts to health care even if it means taxes are raised,” Mr. Sisto said. “Fifty eight percent of downstate suburban voters and 63% of upstate residents support higher taxes over health care cuts.”

“This poll makes abundantly clear that New Yorkers place enormous value on their ability to access local health care services,” Mr. Sisto said. “This information should give the Legislature good reason to fight hard to mitigate the tremendous health care cuts Governor Paterson has proposed in his Executive Budget plan.”

Additionally, according to the poll, a plurality of voters, 37%, say New York spends too little on Medicaid, compared to 22% who say too much is spent. One in five voters thinks New York spends about the right amount of money on Medicaid. The poll also found that, by a margin of 49% to 33%, New Yorkers have a favorable view of the Medicaid system in New York.

The poll also found that more than three-quarters of New Yorkers rate their local hospital as “good” or better, including 45% who rate the quality of their local hospital as either “excellent” or “very good.” Only 5% rated their local hospital as poor.

“New Yorkers expect exceptional care and service from their local hospitals, and largely that’s what they get,” Mr. Sisto said. “Voters clearly understand the financial squeeze under which hospitals and other health care providers are forced to operate. And they clearly do not want to see the state budget balanced by cutting money to hospitals, health care, or Medicaid.”

**Note:** For this poll, calls were made to 794 registered voters between November 6 and 12. The margin of error is  $\pm 3.5\%$

The poll results are available online at [http://www.hanys.org/communications/polls/2008-12-31\\_healthcare\\_state\\_budget\\_poll.pdf](http://www.hanys.org/communications/polls/2008-12-31_healthcare_state_budget_poll.pdf).

*HANYS, the only statewide hospital and continuing care association in New York State, represents more than 550 non-profit and public hospitals, nursing homes, home care agencies, and other health care organizations.*