



Healthcare Association
of New York State

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HANYS LAUNCHES STATEWIDE TV ADVERTISING BLITZ TO FIGHT MASSIVE CUTS TO HEALTH CARE SERVICES AND JOBS

**Realistic, Emotionally Compelling Spot to Educate New Yorkers About How the Governor's
Budget Plan Will Impact Their Access to Local Health Care Services and Jobs**

Promotes www.helpyourhospital.org Web Site to Engage Public in the Budget Process

**Web Site Features Letter-Writing Feature and Online Petition Demanding That the
State Uses Anticipated Federal Medicaid Funding to Restore State Medicaid Cuts**

ALBANY, N.Y. — The Healthcare Association of New York State (HANYS) today announced the launch of a statewide television messaging blitz designed to educate the public about how Governor Paterson's proposed health care cuts will result in health care service and job losses in nearly every community in the state. The message will begin airing statewide on Monday, January 19.

The message, titled, *Think Again*, can be viewed at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=85c7U4wHF54>.

The emotionally charged 30-second spot features the real-world scenario of a couple rushing their young daughter to their local hospital only to find that it has closed. The spot culminates by informing viewers that 21 hospitals have closed in New York in just the last eight years and asks viewers to visit a one-of-a-kind Web site, www.helpyourhospital.org. Visitors to this Web site can enter their ZIP Code to find out what the Governor's cuts will mean to health care services and jobs in their local communities.

The Web site also features "action" buttons where visitors can instantly send a letter to their state Senate and Assembly members and sign an online petition calling on the Legislature to ensure all federal Medicaid dollars New York is expected to receive are used to restore Governor's Medicaid cuts. Even before the launch of the TV campaign, the Web site has yielded more than 1,000 letters to legislators and 3,000 petition signatures.

"Our message to the public is that this scenario can happen in your community if these cuts are not rejected," said HANYS President Daniel Sisto. "Health care services have already been cut twice this fiscal year by more than \$1 billion, and now we're facing another \$5 billion in cuts over the next two years."

“Hospitals have been bled dry year after year by budget cuts and the failure of government payers to reimburse for the true cost of care. We simply can no longer do more with less. These cuts will mean we’ll have to do less with less, and that means the elimination of critical health care services such as cancer screenings and well-child clinics, reduced emergency room capacity, and in some instances, as we have seen too many times in the past, it could mean the outright closure of a hospital.

“Moreover, service reductions will yield staff reductions, which we have already begun seeing across the state. In the midst of an economic crisis, it makes no sense for the government to create job losses in the only economic sector that is viable in many communities. They are cutting services and jobs when we need them the most. It’s bad public policy times two,” said Mr. Sisto.

New York hospitals collectively generate an operating margin of less than 1%, the second lowest in the nation. This weak financial footing, combined with recent enacted and proposed state budget cuts, are already resulting in the loss of jobs and services. In just the last month, three hospitals have announced restructuring plans, including layoffs, with one of the three forced to shut down a skilled nursing facility, displacing dozens of residents and eliminating hundreds of jobs.

“The answer is clear—the state is expected to receive up to \$5 billion in federal Medicaid funding through the federal stimulus plan currently being developed by Congress. The Legislature and Governor must ensure that every one of those federal Medicaid dollars is used to restore the massive state Medicaid cuts the Governor has proposed, especially now, when more and more New Yorkers will need to rely on Medicaid as the economy struggles,” commented Mr. Sisto.

The Healthcare Association of New York State is the only statewide hospital and continuing care association in New York State, representing more than 550 non-profit and public hospitals, nursing homes, home care agencies, and other health care organizations.