



Healthcare Association
of New York State

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NEARLY 30,000 NEW YORKERS JOIN ONLINE FIGHT TO SAVE HOSPITALS AND NURSING HOMES

ALBANY, N.Y. — Nearly 30,000 New Yorkers have joined a first-of-its-kind online campaign to protect health care in their communities. These everyday New Yorkers visited www.helpyourhospital.org and its companion site, www.helpournursinghome.org, where they took action to stop the Governor's proposed cuts and taxes, which threaten their local health care providers. Specifically:

- Nearly 16,000 New Yorkers used the tools on the Web site to send letters to their state legislators; and
- More than 12,000 New Yorkers signed an online petition to lend their support to ensuring that the Medicaid dollars included in the recently adopted federal economic stimulus package are used for mitigating the Governor's proposed Medicaid cuts.

This outpouring of support for health care in New York is unprecedented. Using these unique online tools, the Healthcare Association of New York State (HANYS) has been able to mobilize a far greater number of New Yorkers than any of the Association's previous letter-writing campaigns. HANYS launched the Web sites earlier this year.

"We are delighted that New Yorkers have responded so enthusiastically to this online campaign, but we are not surprised," commented Daniel Sisto, President of HANYS. "When people understand that the Governor's cuts directly threaten health care in their own communities, they are eager to make a difference."

Mr. Sisto noted that the positive response by New Yorkers confirms the results of a poll of New York voters recently conducted by Siena Research Institute on behalf of HANYS. The Siena poll shows that New Yorkers overwhelmingly support protecting health care providers from cuts. 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.

The **helpyourhospital.org** and **helpournursinghome.org** Web sites feature a ZIP Code search engine that provides visitors with a summary of how much funding their local health care facilities would lose under the Governor's plan, and the potential impact these losses would have on health care services and jobs in their communities. The sites also offer a tool that makes it easy to send a letter to members of the State Legislature, and a petition to urge lawmakers to use federal Medicaid funds to mitigate the Governor's cuts and taxes.

Nearly every health care provider in New York State would lose critical funding under Governor Paterson's 2009-2010 Executive Budget proposal that, in total, seeks to eliminate more than \$1.3 billion in funding for hospitals, nursing homes, and home health care providers. If enacted, hospitals, nursing homes, and home health care providers would be forced to curtail services and lay off staff.

HANYS is advocating against these cuts and is supporting using the \$5.2 billion in federal Medicaid stimulus funding that the state will receive in state fiscal year 2009-2010 to offset the cuts. "Grassroots efforts by New Yorkers are a key element of our advocacy," commented Mr. Sisto. "HANYS created **helpyourhospital.org** and **helpournursinghome.org** to help give people in communities across the state a voice in determining how the state budget will affect health care services and jobs in their hometowns and neighborhoods. We are pleased that New Yorkers are using these sites to tell lawmakers to preserve funding for their local hospitals, protecting critical local services and jobs."

The Healthcare Association of New York State (HANYS) 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.