



Healthcare Association
of New York State

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:
WILLIAM VAN SLYKE
(518) 431-7770

STATEWIDE SURVEY SHOWS PERSISTING PHYSICIAN SHORTAGE

Lack of Doctors Threatens Access to Care Across New York

ALBANY, NY — A statewide survey of hospitals by the Healthcare Association of New York State (HANYS) confirms that New York's physician shortage is not diminishing and is likely to worsen.

The results of HANYS' 2009 Physician Advocacy Survey are available in a report titled, *The Doctor Can't See You Now*, on HANYS' Web site at www.hanys.org.

"The shortage of physicians, nurses, and other health care workers continues to threaten access to care, and no health care reform effort can succeed without enough caregivers to provide needed care," commented HANYS' President Daniel Sisto.

The report, developed in collaboration with Iroquois Healthcare Alliance, Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council, Northern Metropolitan Hospital Association, Rochester Regional Healthcare Association, and Western New York Healthcare Association, corroborates studies by the State University of New York Center for Health Workforce Studies and American Association of Medical Colleges (AAMC).

The Doctor Can't See You Now shows persistent physician shortages, with recruitment barely able to offset retirements, and a severe lack of physicians in primary care and specialties such as obstetrics/gynecology, general surgery, and psychiatry. Survey respondents reported a current need for more than 1,300 physicians.

HANYS' survey found that:

- nearly half of the responding hospitals (45%) said there are times when their emergency department is not covered for certain specialty services, and patients must travel to other hospitals, often long distances, to receive needed care;
- twenty-four percent reported they have had to reduce or eliminate specialty services at their hospitals because they are unable to recruit physicians;
- sixty-six percent of respondents indicated they have to pay for on-call services to achieve needed coverage; and
- seventy-five percent employ expensive *locum tenens* (temporary physicians).

Adding to the alarm of the survey results is New York's aging physician population. According to AAMC, New York ranks second in the number of physicians over age 60.

To address the physician shortage, HANYS supports funding and improvements to the Doctors Across New York Program, removing regulatory barriers to increase telemedicine opportunities in under-served communities, and improving opportunities for both nurse practitioners and physician assistants to serve in communities needing physicians.

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.