



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

George M. Borrello

Senator George Borrello Announces New Brooks Hospital in Fredonia is Moving Forward

GEORGE M. BORRELLO June 3, 2024

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Achievement culminates hard-fought efforts to retain and improve health care access in northern Chautauqua County

FREDONIA, NY – Calling it a ‘historic moment’ for the residents of northern Chautauqua County, Senator George Borrello proudly announced that the construction of a new Brooks Hospital in Fredonia is finally set to move forward after eight long years of advocacy and effort. The Hochul administration will release \$74 million in previously approved state

funding that is necessary to green light the project.

“This is a historic moment for our community and a proud one for all of us who have led the charge to bring a new hospital to our community. Accessible, quality health care and updated facilities should be available to all New Yorkers, no matter where they live. However, rural areas like Chautauqua County have increasingly struggled to meet that goal due to economic factors, population shifts and labor shortages. This will be a game changer for our local health care landscape and a quality-of-life asset that will boost the appeal of our area for employers, families, and seniors,” said Senator Borrello.

Senator Borrello noted that the victory is rewarding in light of several years of vocal, proactive advocacy and organizing to make the project happen.

“Assemblyman Andy Goodell and I launched the effort to unite local elected officials and other stakeholders. We created a blue-ribbon panel to review the Brooks TLC plan for a new hospital, which included some well-known local experts, including the former CEO of Brooks TLC, Rick Ketchum. We brought together nearly every local elected official in the northern Chautauqua County region to sign onto a letter to the governor and Department of Health to show strength and unity on the new hospital proposal,” said Sen. Borrello.

“While the current hospital in Dunkirk has been an important presence in our area for generations, it has outlived its effectiveness as an acute care facility and is continually hindered by costly repair and maintenance issues,” said Sen. Borrello. “The new state-of-the-art hospital that will take its place will improve care, enhance recruitment of physicians and healthcare personnel, and significantly reduce the operating deficit that the state is currently subsidizing. It is a huge win for our area,” he added.

The current facility, located in Dunkirk, was built in 1942. At 170,000 square feet its capacity exceeds the demand for beds and is costly to maintain. While there are 65 beds, only about 18 to 20 are occupied, on average. Senator Borrello noted that the excess capacity is costly and contributes to the hospital's operating deficit, which is over \$20 million per year. It is projected that the efficiencies and improvements of the new hospital will bring the deficit closer to break-even status.

Planning for the hospital began in 2016 when Brooks-TLC was awarded a \$57 million grant that included state and federal funds to build a new modern hospital and to convert TLC Lakeshore to an Ambulatory Destination Center specializing in chemical dependency. The 2017 state budget included another \$17 million dollar Healthcare Facility Transformation grant for the projects. However, progress was slowed by disagreements over the location of the new hospital, the closure of Lakeshore in 2020 and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Features of the new hospital will include emergency services, medical and surgical beds, surgical suites and procedure rooms, imaging with CT scans, MRI and ultrasound, stat lab services, a pharmacy, support services and a helipad. The hospital will be located at the former Cornell Cooperative Extension site to the west of the roundabout on East Main Street.

Over the years, Senator Borrello continued to advocate for the project in frequent meetings with representatives of the governor's office, the Health Department, and the Division of Budget. Throughout the long process, he kept the regional coalition of elected officials, labor representatives and leaders from the Brooks-TLC engaged and committed to their shared goal.

"When it comes to the health and safety of your constituents, there is no 'giving up.' These are the people we serve and have sworn to represent. This community is our home and

assuring its future is what drives me forward every day,” said Senator Borrello.

“My thanks go out to Governor Hochul and officials at the Health Department for their commitment of funding and support for this new hospital, to officials with Brooks Hospital and Kaleida Health for their ongoing efforts, and to 1199 SEIU and our state and local partners for being tireless allies in this vitally important effort. The outcome was worth it all.”