



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph E. Robach

Robach: Upstate Caucus Focuses on Impact of Governor's Budget on Upstate Healthcare Facilities

JOSEPH E. ROBACH March 15, 2009

Upstate Healthcare Advocates Warn of Detrimental Impact of Paterson's Proposals

Diane Ashley, CEO of Rochester Regional Healthcare Advocates, John Bartimole, President of Western New York Healthcare Association and Gary Fitzgerald, President of Iroquois Healthcare Alliance spoke to a room full of members of the New York State Senate and Assembly and their staff about the severe impact the Governor's budget would have on Upstate healthcare providers and, in turn, the health of New Yorkers.

Their comments touched on a variety of healthcare topics including: the Medicaid system, radical home care restructuring proposals, investment in primary care, proposed hospital inpatient "reforms", transferring Graduate Medical Education (GME) funds and the proposed nursing home reimbursement scheme.

"I want to thank Diane, John and Gary for coming here today to talk about the Governor's healthcare proposals and their implications" stated Senator Robach. "The Executive proposal seems to disproportionately affect Upstate and will further cripple our economy. As Upstate legislators, we need to ban together to halt these items in the budget that will jeopardize the health of Upstate New Yorkers."

Diane Ashley, CEO of Rochester Regional Healthcare Advocates, stated to legislators “Healthcare providers in the communities you represent, and all across New York State, are the largest employers and key to the economic fabric of the communities they serve.” She continued, “The Governor’s budget as proposed is a job killing budget and will cause major detriment to our communities and the people we serve – the elderly and children, their mothers and fathers, and your neighbors and constituents.”

At the meeting, the advocates noted that in Upstate New York, hospitals are reimbursed less than their cost and the proposed cuts and reform will make this worse. Real reform, they suggested, would have the State reimburse hospitals for their cost, which would allow hospitals to continue to invest in primary care. The advocates also pointed out that the amount of Medicaid relief included in the federal stimulus package is four times the amount needed to reject all of the Governor’s proposed healthcare provider cuts, taxes, and redistributions.

“I want to extend my deep appreciation to my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for coming together to hear the concerns of our Upstate advocates. The Governor’s healthcare proposal will affect every single Upstate New Yorker. While budgetary spending must be reduced, we cannot jeopardize the health and safety of New Yorkers.”