



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

George D. Maziarz

## Budget Highlights: Health And Mental Hygiene

GEORGE D. MAZIARZ

### SENATE PASSES 2008-09 HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH HYGIENE BUDGET

#### Restores \$168.9 Million to Hospitals, Nursing Homes and Home Care

The New York State Senate passed 2008-09 budget legislation (S.6808-C) that restores \$245 million in health care funds, including \$168.9 million to hospitals, nursing homes, and home care, to ensure that all New Yorkers have access to quality, affordable health care in their communities.

The 2008-09 State Budget affirms our commitment to making sure quality, affordable health care is available for all New Yorkers. This legislation restores much-needed funding for hospitals, nursing homes, and home care, and at the same time, makes important reforms to make our health care system more cost-efficient and effective. By reprioritizing the Executive Budget and making spending cuts to the government bureaucracy, we were able to take care of what really matters to New Yorkers, ensuring quality health care.

The budget bill (S.6808-C) rejects a complicated proposal included in the Executive Budget that would have changed the hospital reimbursement program that has been in place for over 25 years, with little analysis on what impact the changes would have made on facilities throughout the State. The 2008-09 budget restores \$35.9 for hospital inpatient services and

implements an alternative proposal that would -- over the course of a four year period -- shift Medicaid dollars from hospital inpatient services to more cost-effective outpatient settings.

The 2008-09 State budget restores \$85 million in state funds for nursing homes and includes \$15 million for nursing home recruitment and retention programs, that were cut in the Executive Budget.

In addition, the 2008-09 health budget bill restores \$25 million in cuts to home care and provides \$8 million for the rural home care program.

The budget includes \$15.6 million to create the "Doctors Across New York" program in order to address the shortage of physicians in rural and poor urban areas. The program includes:

- > A loan repayment program -- up to \$150,000 -- for medical school loans for new physicians who commit to practice in medically underserved communities for five years;
- > Two year grants totaling \$100,000 to support new doctors who join or establish a practice in communities that are medically underserved;
- > Funding for minority and economically-disadvantaged students who are accepted to medical school programs; and
- > \$5 million to support resident training in community settings.

**Other highlights of the 2008-09 health and mental health budget legislation include:**

- > Rejects the HMO premium tax proposed in the Executive Budget;
- > Invests \$56 million into outpatient and ambulatory care;
- > Makes restorations to the Early Intervention Cost of Living Adjustment;

> Includes \$34.2 million for public health initiatives; and

> Expands the State's Children's Health Insurance Program from 250% to 400% of the Federal Poverty Level, ensuring all uninsured children have access to quality, affordable care.

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