



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Bill Perkins

Full Remarks Of Senator Bill Perkins | New York State Nurses Association 2014 Biennial Meeting—"Single-Payer HealthCare for All"

BILL PERKINS September 16, 2014



Today, State Senator Bill Perkins (D/WF—Harlem) spoke at the 2014 Biennial Meeting of the New York State Nurses Association (NYSNA) about the urgent need for Universal, Single Payer HealthCare in New York State during a panel entitled "*Single-Payer Healthcare for All: Registered Nurses Respond to the Call for Universal Healthcare in New York State and Nationwide.*"

The Senator's remarks centered around legislation (Senate Bill 2078-A | Assembly Bill 5389-A) that he carries, along with longstanding Assembly Health Committee Chair, and unstinting

Universal, Single Payer HealthCare advocate, Dick Gottfried—called New York Health.

Highlights of the Senator's remarks follow; the entire speech is attached to this blog entry.

"It's totally appropriate that our campaign to finally enact single payer healthcare begins here today—with our nurses. Nurses are such a singular focal point in the healthcare system: they are laser-focused on the quality of patient care; they are not pencil pushing over a spreadsheet to cut costs (and reduce care) but instead are totally devoted to the well-being of patients; they don't get caught up in the layers of red tape and inefficiency that inflate costs and delay or deny essential medical services. Nurses are the heartbeat and the conscience of our healthcare system. As such, nurses are the ideal ambassadors for New York Health—a true model of Universal, Single Payer HealthCare.

Our New York Health Bill writes an important moral maxim into law: "Your health is your wealth!"

Succinctly stated, it moves from an inherently flawed model that is based upon private profit and greed—at the expense of quality of care and wise tax dollar investment—to a system that treats the health of individuals and families as a universal public good that is always given top priority.

Healthcare is finally recognized as a human right, not a market-based commodity. We can sum New York Health up in three words: "Patients before profits!"—pure and simple.

The Empire State needs to lead on this issue—we can look to Vermont, Canada, the United Kingdom, Taiwan, New Zealand, Norway, Denmark and Sweden for instructive lessons and replicable models, as well as inspiration—but ultimately this movement is about enshrining a universal, fundamental human right in our world-class State. When we do things right by patients in New York State—when we commence to save our counties billions of dollars and improve healthcare outcomes in dramatic fashion—states will then be lining up to replicate the New York Health model—and each of you will not only have built the foundation here at home but you'll have constructed an escalating effect in this country and indeed, the world."