



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Senate & Assembly budgets restore \$300 million for new hospital in Oneida Co.

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO March 11, 2016

ISSUE: **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, HEALTH CARE, DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION**

ONLINE AT UTICAOD.COM \$1.00

COMETS READY FOR ANOTHER BUSY WEEKEND SPORTS, 1C

SUSPECTED HORSE SLAYER MUST HAVE MENTAL EVALUATION LOCAL, 3A

ECONOMISTS: \$15 WAGE WOULD HELP 3 MILLION STATE, 1B

\$300 MILLION, IT'S BACK

■ Hospital money returns to budget ■ Governor still must approve

BY AMY NEFF ROTH
aroth@uticaod.com

The Utica area probably is getting a new hospital after all.

"Both houses (of the state Legislature) have committed to restoring the funding for the new hospital in Utica and we'd like the governor to accept those recommendations and move forward with this," said Assemblyman Anthony Brindisi, D-Utica.

are questions left unanswered.

Last year's budget allocated funding for the construction of a new Mohawk Valley Health System hospital to replace the system's two existing inpatient facilities. But Gov. Andrew Cuomo's proposed budget this year reallocated that money, diverting \$100 million to the Marcy nanocenter, \$195 million to hospitals across the state and \$5 million to breast cancer screening.

R-Rome, and state Sen. David Valesky, D-Oneida, started lobbying to get the money back in the budget. So did the Healthcare Association of New York State, and this week members of UFCW District Union Local One's Professional & Health Care Division from St. Elizabeth Medical Center, part of the health system.

Thanks to bipartisan support, the funding will go back into the Assembly's version of the budget and the

ABOUT THE HOSPITAL

Being built by: Mohawk Valley Health System.

Will replace: Inpatient services at the system's St. Elizabeth and St. Luke's campuses.

Proposed site: Downtown Utica between Oriskany, Columbia and State streets and Broadway, if that location proves financially viable.

Backup site: St. Luke's Campus in

\$600 million for the downtown site.

How much state allocated last year: \$300 million.

What happened to that funding: It was reallocated by the governor's proposed fiscal year 2016-17 budget. The governor has expressed his commitment to the project, which local officials say

UTICA – State Senator Joseph Griffo, State Senator David Valesky and State Assemblyman Anthony Brindisi announced Thursday that the New York State Senate and Assembly will restore \$300 million in funding for a new proposed hospital in Oneida County.

After this vital funding had been left out of the Governor's Executive Budget earlier this year, Senator Griffo, Senator Valesky and Assemblyman Brindisi said the \$300 million for the

Mohawk Valley Health System will now be included in both versions of the budgets proposed by the Senate and Assembly in their respective houses.

Although the Governor has repeatedly offered assurances to restore this funding after the money had been reallocated for other purposes in his Executive Budget, Griffo, Valesky and Brindisi said their corrective action will ensure that this funding is now part of the budget process.

Senators Griffo and Valesky will be voting in the Senate on Monday to restore the \$300 million. The Assembly is also expected to vote on their proposed budget next week to similarly restore the funding.

Senator Joseph Griffo, R-Rome, said: “Initially, I was dismayed and disappointed that the Executive Budget had left out the state funding for a new hospital that the Legislature had worked so hard to secure last year. The Mohawk Valley Health System has shown its vision for a new state-of-the-art facility, and they’ve been doing their best to put together a budget, timeline, location analysis and re-use plan for the current facilities to ensure that this hospital project is well-thought-out and accomplished in the community’s best interest. But in order to move forward, Mohawk Valley Health System must be confident that the state will fulfill its promise. By now taking this corrective action in the Legislature, we’re hopeful that the Governor’s administration will stand by its stated commitment and agree to the necessary funds we have budgeted for this important community project to improve the healthcare services of Oneida County.”

Senator David Valesky, D-Oneida, said: “As a Central New York senator who also serves as Vice Chair of the Senate Health Committee, I have made restoration of the \$300 million commitment to the Mohawk Valley Health System a high budget priority. I am pleased that working together with my colleagues in the Legislature, we have been able to restore these

important funds in the legislative budget resolutions. Our singular focus now turns to including this critical appropriation in the final budget agreement with the administration.”

Assemblyman Anthony Brindisi, D-Utica, said: “I am very pleased the Assembly and Senate will be including the funding for the new healthcare facility in our one house budget proposals. This funding is critical because we are in need of a new state-of-the-art hospital to better serve the healthcare needs of our community. When I first learned the Executive Budget did not include the state funding for a new hospital, I immediately contacted Speaker Carl Heastie to express my concerns. The Speaker was very supportive of the project and a key partner in working to include the funding in the Assembly’s budget proposal. I look forward to working with Governor Cuomo, the leaders of both houses, and my legislative colleagues, to make sure this funding is included in the final budget.”

Scott Perra, FACHE, President & CEO of Mohawk Valley Health System, said: “Assemblyman Brindisi, Senator Griffo and Senator Valesky have been working diligently to restore, through the Legislature, the \$300 million in the New York State budget. We also appreciate County Executive Picente and Mayor Palmieri for supporting their efforts. We are now hopeful that Governor Andrew Cuomo will demonstrate his commitment to this project by approving the budget so we can move forward with the new hospital and significantly improve healthcare for our community.”

Griffo, Valesky and Brindisi also thanked Oneida County Executive Anthony Picente Jr. and City of Utica Mayor Robert Palmieri for their continued support, and for the actions they’ve taken to see that this hospital project becomes a reality.

Oneida County Executive Anthony Picente Jr. said: “I am pleased to see this action by our legislators is taking place to move this project forward.”

Utica Mayor Robert Palmieri said: “Today's announcement is a testament to bipartisan leadership and a result of everyone working together for the betterment of our community. I commend and thank Senator Griffo and Assemblyman Brindisi for their tireless and effective advocacy in re-securing funding for a state-of-the-art Utica hospital. This is an important step forward, and we will continue to work with our partners in government, the MVHS Board, business leaders and residents to ensure this once in a lifetime opportunity and transformational project comes to fruition.”

###