



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brad Hoylman-Sigal

Assemblymember Richard Gottfried and Senator Brad Hoylman Applaud Signing of Legislation Increasing Consumer Advocate Representation on the Public Health and Health Planning Council

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NEW YORK— Assemblymember Richard N. Gottfried (D/WFP-Manhattan), Chair of the Assembly Health Committee, and Senator Brad Hoylman (D/WFP-Manhattan) applaud the signing of their bill ([S.7304/A.0530](#)), which, along with companion legislation that is expected to be passed by the legislature next session, will increase the representation of health care consumer advocacy organizations appointed to the Public Health and Health Planning Council (PHHPC), and will for the first time ensure that the consumer advocates appointed to the PHHPC are from organizations with a focus on issues of interest to low and moderate income New Yorkers. The PHHPC has broad advisory and rulemaking authority including the ability to make decisions regarding construction, establishment, transfer, service changes, or equipment acquisitions of health care facilities, home care agencies, and hospices.

Assemblymember Gottfried said: “New Yorkers will now have a greater voice on important decisions affecting their health care. In a rapidly changing health care landscape, low- and moderate-income New Yorkers deserve more say on critical issues on the health care facilities that serve them, like the consolidation and downsizing of hospitals and their transformation into outpatient facilities or freestanding emergency departments, and this law will help ensure greater public representation, participation, and transparency in that process.”

Senator Hoylman said: “In the last two decades New York State has closed 41 hospitals and lost over 20,000 hospital beds. We just saw our hospital system pushed to the brink in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting the true cost of 20 years of closures. Now more than ever, consumers need additional voices in the critical decisions that affect our health and well-being. The Public Health and Health Planning Council has broad powers over the construction and closure of hospitals and other facilities, but until this legislation the general public had a limited voice within the PHHPC. I’m grateful to Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins for prioritizing diverse voices in health care, Assemblymember Gottfried for carrying this legislation with me, and Governor Cuomo for signing it.”

Lois Uttley, coordinator of Consumer Voices for Health System

Accountability (CVHSA) and Director of Women’s Health for Community

Catalyst said: “Finally, low and moderate-income New Yorker health consumers will have a voice in state oversight of the health care systems they depend on for their very survival,” said “Increased consumer representation on the state Public Health and Health Planning Council (PHHPC) will help ensure state oversight applies

the lessons of COVID-19, which exposed how some communities have been left without adequate hospital capacity because of decades of hospital consolidation. We are grateful that Assembly Health Committee Chair Richard Gottfried and Senator Brad Hoylman have fought hard to win this victory for health consumers. We applaud Governor Cuomo's signing of the bill and urge that he quickly follow through by appointing a qualified consumer representative."

The PHHPC plays an important role in reviewing and approving proposed changes in the health care delivery system involving hospitals, ambulatory surgery centers, diagnostic and treatment centers, home health agencies and nursing homes. Decisions made by the PHHPC can dramatically affect New Yorkers' access to timely, affordable care in their own communities. For example, hospital mergers or downsizing could force patients to travel to other locations for care or cause increases in the price of health care. Adding representation for low- and moderate-income New Yorkers will increase transparency and community accountability for this important body.