

**RANKING MINORITY MEMBER**  
CIVIL SERVICE AND PENSIONS  
CRIME VICTIMS, CRIME AND  
CORRECTION

**COMMITTEES**

ALCOHOLISM AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE  
CODES  
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES  
LABOR

**NEW YORK**  
**STATE**  
**SENATE**



**SENATOR**  
**FREDERICK J. AKSHAR II**  
52<sup>ND</sup> SENATE DISTRICT

PLEASE RESPOND TO:

**ALBANY OFFICE:**  
ROOM 608  
LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BLDG.  
ALBANY, NEW YORK 12247  
518-455-2677

**DISTRICT OFFICE:**  
BINGHAMTON STATE OFFICE BLDG.  
44 HAWLEY STREET, STE. 1607  
BINGHAMTON, NEW YORK 13901  
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September 7, 2021

The Honorable Kathy Hochul  
Governor of New York State  
NYS State Capitol Building  
Albany, NY 12224

Dr. Howard Zucker, Commissioner  
New York State Department of Health  
Corning Tower, Empire State Plaza  
Albany, New York 12237

Dear Governor Hochul & Commissioner Zucker:

Over the last week or so, I've heard from countless constituents in the healthcare field who are facing the impossible choice of losing their jobs or taking the COVID-19 vaccine against their deeply-held personal and religious objections.

I'm fully vaccinated and wholeheartedly support the New York State Department of Health's mission to protect public health and stop the spread of this deadly virus, but taking the vaccine should be a personal choice and I think you're grossly underestimating how many people are willing to walk away from their careers on September 27<sup>th</sup>.

United Health Services President/CEO John Carrigg tells me that 20% of his staff, amounting to approximately 1,000 employees, remain unvaccinated. If UHS has to terminate even 5% of these essential workers due to the COVID-19 vaccine mandate, they'll be forced to reduce services and shut down one of their three psychiatric inpatient units, which are currently operating at full capacity.

Coronavirus outbreaks are spreading exponentially in the Southern Tier and across the great State of New York, threatening to overwhelm our already strained healthcare systems. Who's going to care for these patients when we lose 20% of our healthcare workforce? What are your contingency plans in the event of a major staffing crisis? Let me assure you, we have no backup labor pool to draw from, Commissioner.

This high-stakes game of chicken you're playing is putting our hospitals, nursing homes and long-term care facilities, as well as the patients they serve, in a very perilous position.

I'm calling on NYS Department of Health to thwart this massive employee exodus by giving these employers a reasonable and practical testing alternative for unvaccinated workers.

Thank you for your time, consideration and swift action here.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'F. Akshar II', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Frederick J. Akshar II  
New York State Senator

FJA/vad

cc: UHS Hospitals President/CEO John Carrigg  
Ascension Lourdes President/CEO Kathy Connerton