



**Senate Finance and Assembly Ways and Means
Joint Legislative Hearing on the 2014-15 Executive Budget - Health and Medicaid**

**Written Testimony from Trilby de Jung, CEO
Finger Lakes Health Systems Agency (FLHSA)**

Feb. 3, 2014

Distinguished members, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo's proposed budget. I am writing on behalf of Finger Lakes Health Systems Agency, an independent, regional health collaborative in Rochester. Our agency strongly supports the Governor's proposal of \$7 million in 2014-15, and \$16 million in 2015-16, to support 11 Regional Health Improvement Collaboratives in New York State, including funding for Finger Lakes Health Systems Agency to provide coordination, best practices and technical assistance to other regions.

As the Governor detailed in his budget message, Regional Health Improvement Collaboratives will function as neutral conveners of key health care stakeholders to identify regional challenges and implement solutions. Through these collaboratives, practitioners, hospitals, nursing homes, community health centers, health plans, patients, and other stakeholders will work together to plan, implement, and coordinate activities to transform the health care system.

Rather than focus on the "bricks and mortar" of health care facilities, these collaboratives concentrate on community need, the coordination of health care and home- and community-based services, improving outcomes, and maximizing system efficiencies. They also conduct rigorous data collection, health data analysis, and clinical, community, and consumer engagement activities that support health improvement.

Regional Health Improvement Collaboratives can help New York State achieve three key objectives:

- 1) Better health for communities across the state, through such actions as measuring population health in a particular region or sub-region, reporting results transparently and publicly, and conducting evidence-based patient and community engagement activities.

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- 2) Better care for state residents, by measuring health care outcomes and publishing quality data; providing technical assistance in support of the development of patient-centered medical homes; and incorporating patient experience data to shape further innovation.
- 3) Lower per capita cost of care, through such activities as analyzing regional experience in health care utilization; organizing initiatives to ensure efficient utilization of services and appropriate linkage to non-medical services; and analyzing quality, cost, and spending data.

New York State government will play an important role in ensuring the success of the collaboratives, from overseeing the strategic direction and high-level goals, to helping establish performance benchmarks, evaluating outcomes, developing common data sets, and continuing to enhance the financial stability of the state's health care delivery system.

Based on our experience in the Finger Lakes region, we know that Regional Health Improvement Collaboratives are successful in improving health care and in controlling spiraling health care costs. Let me share a few examples:

- Forty-seven primary care practices in Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Seneca, Wayne, and Yates counties are participating in an effort to transform primary care in our region. This initiative focuses on integrating community services into primary care practices to address the social and behavioral determinants of health. It also is creating a payment model that rewards better outcomes. This effort is expected to reduce regional health care costs by \$48 million over the next three years – consisting of medical cost savings to all payers including state Medicaid spending.
- Finger Lakes Health Systems Agency convened a commission that brought together leaders from business, insurers, hospitals, physician practices, and community groups to decrease the number of potentially preventable hospitalizations and the number of avoidable ED visits. Results included reducing hospital readmissions and getting three Monroe County hospitals to agree to consistent discharge standards. We expect a cumulative savings of \$17 million from this effort.
- A partnership between Finger Lakes Health Systems Agency and the Rochester Business Alliance (our local Chamber of Commerce) is achieving results in improving high blood pressure control. A coalition of business leaders, physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, health systems, insurers, and human service agencies, this group created a registry of more than 100,000 hypertensive patients to study and analyze blood pressure and health data. More than 160 volunteers representing 67 organizations have joined the effort, and participating practices have reported significantly improved blood pressure control rates for their patients.

- Finger Lakes Health Systems Agency also convened a commission on aging to develop a long-range health services plan. This commission's proposed service delivery model calls for a greater shift from nursing home care to home- and community-based services. Estimated Medicaid cost savings are in excess of \$57 million.

None of these initiatives would be successful without multi-stakeholder collaboration – the kind of collaboration called for in the proposed Regional Health Improvement Collaboratives across the state. Health care stakeholders in our region have demonstrated, time and again, their commitment and their ability to set aside competing interests for the overall health of our community.

These initiatives have contributed significantly to Rochester achieving the lowest overall Medicare spending rate in the nation and a lower utilization rate for acute hospital care, as well as our region scoring in the top 10 percent nationwide on health system performance as measured by the Commonwealth Fund's local report card.

Finger Lakes Health Systems Agency believes, as the Governor stated in his State of the State address, that our collaborative experience can serve as a model for other communities, and we look forward to helping achieve better health outcomes across the Empire State. This will be made possible with the support of the Legislature, and with the continued support of the Governor and the Department of Health.

I encourage you to support the Governor Cuomo's proposed funding of regional health planning activities contained in his Executive Budget proposal. Thank you for your consideration.

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