



THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY 12247

SENATOR THOMAS F. O'MARA
53RD DISTRICT

January 6, 2011

Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor
State of New York
Second Floor
State Capitol
Albany, New York 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

First and foremost, thank you for your remarks yesterday, which I believe appropriately and effectively set the stage for the challenging and difficult legislative session facing us this year.

In particular, I'm grateful for this early opportunity to express my strong support for your administration's immediate and high-level focus on the long-standing need to overhaul New York's system of Medicaid. It's an effort that many of us here in the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes region have long advocated, pushed for and, most importantly, taken action on.

It's not necessary for this correspondence to recount the enormous and out-of-control burden that Medicaid inflicts on our local governments, local property taxpayers, and the state as a whole; however, I do appreciate the chance, at the very beginning of your proposed strategy, to welcome your emphasis on the need for a complete, top-to-bottom examination and restructuring of the Medicaid health care delivery system – a system that is clearly not working.

While I know that I join many of my legislative colleagues in the belief that we must remain diligent and even more aggressive in state-level efforts to ensure zero tolerance for the widespread, often fraudulent abuses that receive most of the public attention, I'm especially enthusiastic about your initiative to fully target the structural deficiencies involving mismanagement and over-utilization.

Toward this end, I'll take this chance to also re-emphasize efforts that have been underway in Chemung County over the past decade under the committed and dedicated leadership of Chemung County Executive Tom Santulli.

As you know, County Executive Santulli is widely recognized and respected as a bold, innovative, and results-driven leader in this arena of reform, and certainly I've been proud over this time to partner with him to explore, examine, encourage, and implement local efforts to get this system under control, reshape it, make it more cost-effective,

taxpayer-friendly, and, overall, more efficient for patients and providers alike.

In short, Chemung County has produced nationally recognized results on this reform front, including initiatives to improve administration and management, utilize cutting-edge data-mining technology developed by the Horseheads-based Salient Corporation, and, most recently, through the establishment of a comprehensive management organization known as Priority Community Healthcare, which has successfully focused on improving medical outcomes and reducing costs.

With all of this in mind, in closing, I would like to fully welcome the state's first-ever Medicaid Director, Jason Helgersen, to New York. By all accounts, it appears that Mr. Helgersen was effective in Wisconsin and I certainly join you in hoping for and working toward similar success in our state.

In this spirit of cooperation, I'm glad to extend any and every offer of assistance from County Executive Santulli, other local leaders across the Southern Tier, and, as always, from myself, to assist this vital work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom O'Mara", with a stylized flourish at the end.

NYS Senator Tom O'Mara
53rd District