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*The collective voice of Long Island's
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For Release: Immediate, February 29, 2008

SKELOS, HANNON AND NASSAU-SUFFOLK HOSPITAL COUNCIL DECRY SPITZER ADMINISTRATION'S CONTINUED LACK OF TRANSPARENCY

New York State Senate Deputy Majority Leader Dean G. Skelos (R-Rockville Centre), Senate Health Committee Chairman Kemp Hannon (R-Garden City) and Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council President Kevin Dahill express their shared concern regarding the Spitzer Administration's lack of transparency in the disclosure of information relating to the Governor's proposed health care budget.

“Good government is based on transparency and accountability,” said Senator Skelos. “The Spitzer Administration has an obligation to disclose the information necessary to determine the true impact of the Governor's health care cuts on our local hospitals. With the state budget due by March 31st, time is running out.”

Senator Hannon noted, for instance, “The information we were provided is incomplete as it only reflects a single fiscal year and a partial phase-in. There is no accompanying explanation of the numerous formula changes and no detailed discussion of the underlying assumptions that produced these numbers. I have a concern the information we received could lead to an inaccurate understanding of the full impact of such a proposal.”

On February 21st, Senators Skelos and Hannon and Mr. Dahill requested that Governor Spitzer direct the New York State Department of Health to release comprehensive data about the \$800 million in health care cuts included within the Executive Budget. While the Department of Health released budget impact numbers for the state hospitals on February 27th, this information includes several issues that raise questions about the accuracy of these projections.

“This budget is highly policy-oriented and proposes a variety of very technical, multi-level, and multi-year changes that are extremely difficult to assess at this juncture,” said Kevin Dahill. “We have to make sure these proposals are analyzed and any action taken is well thought out. Any changes must also be adequately funded. It will be difficult to accomplish all this, in such a short time frame, without being disruptive to our hospitals.”

Although the Department of Health has indicated its intention to disclose the data upon which its projections were based, the continued delay in the release of this information has prevented the State Legislature and the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council from performing an independent analysis of the Governor's health care budget.

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