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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Bush's Budget Falls Hard on Hospital Patients**

(Hauppauge, New York . . . February 11, 2008) Long Island's 24 not-for-profit and public hospitals will suffer a \$114 million cut in Medicare reimbursements next year, if the budget proposed by President Bush is enacted. The cuts swell to \$1.2 billion during the five-year period, 2009 – 2013. Hospital administrators across Long Island agree that this executive budget is by far the most radical proposal offered by any administration and would undermine all patient care.

“The general public must realize that Medicare cuts affect all patients - not just those insured by this public program – because Medicare is a significant funding stream for all hospitals,” said Kevin Dahill, president and CEO of the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council (NSHC), the association that represents Long Island's hospitals. “When funding is cut, a reduction in services and programs follows. With less money our facilities are forced to offer less.”

This is not good news for Long Island's 2.8 million residents who turn to their hospitals for not only acute and emergency care, but utilize their local hospital for routine screenings and diagnostic procedures, primary and preventive care, and health care guidance and education. Every hospital on Long Island offers either free support groups, screenings and health fairs, mobile clinics and off-site primary medical care, or a similar community benefit, according to the NSHC.

Specifically, President Bush's proposed budget drastically reduces funding for teaching hospitals and hospitals that provide a disproportionate share of care for the poor and uninsured, and it would eliminate for three years the reimbursement increases that all health providers are supposed to receive to keep pace with inflationary costs.

“The President's budget cuts into almost every area of hospital financing and reimbursement, and that's what makes it so unprecedented and disastrous,” said Dahill. “All patients will lose.”

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