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*The collective voice of Long Island's
not-for-profit and public hospitals*

**STATEMENT FROM KEVIN DAHILL, PRESIDENT/CEO
NASSAU-SUFFOLK HOSPITAL COUNCIL**

Governor Paterson's Mid-Year Budget Proposal

(Hauppauge, NY . . . August 13, 2008) Every Long Islander has felt the effects of the current economic downturn in one way or another. Governor Paterson is correct in his goal to achieve fiscal stability for the state and relief for its citizens. However, relief is the last effect New Yorkers will feel, if the Governor's proposed \$78.8 million in Medicaid reimbursement cuts to Long Island's hospitals are adopted by the legislature. Such a step will only make a bad situation even worse. In addition to jeopardizing health services for our most vulnerable populations – the aged, poor, and disabled – the unemployed and underemployed, who are now without health insurance, will have no where to turn for basic health care services for themselves or their families. Making matters worse is the proposed 0.7% tax on sick and injured hospital patients.

The proposals for closing the state's deficit, as outlined by the Governor, lean heavily on the health care industry and, in particular, hospitals. All sectors of public and private industry enjoyed the rewards of the state's past economic prosperity, all are feeling the pinch of the current economic down turn, and all should equally shoulder the burden of lifting the state out of this economic recession.

Long Island's hospital leaders worked diligently with the Governor's office and elected state representatives during the most recent budget process this past spring. Together, with all sectors in mind, we were able to agree on a reasonable budget, and one that sets the stage for further reform, so that the more cost-efficient and health-efficient paradigm of preventive and primary care can take hold and benefit all New Yorkers. We will continue to work with the Governor and our legislators to ensure that health care remains a top priority.

The Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council (NSHC) represents Long Island's 24 not-for-profit and public hospitals. Its goal is to enhance health care for all Long Islanders through advocacy efforts with lawmakers, regulatory agencies, the media, and the public.

To schedule an interview with Kevin Dahill, please call Janine Logan, director of communications at 631-963-4156; cell 631-334-8321.

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