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*The collective voice of Long Island's
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

State Legislators and Hospital Leaders Debate Fate of Federal Stimulus Funding

Holding hospitals harmless and whole, engaging logical reform top priorities

(Hauppauge, NY . . . February 23, 2009) Long Island's elected state representatives and hospital CEOs agree that the \$8 billion in increased federal Medicaid funds included in the economic stimulus package for New York should be used to offset the Governor's projected \$64 million in Medicaid cuts to Long Island hospitals, and, at the same time, allow legislators and policy makers the time and funds to tackle health reimbursement reform in a logical and sustainable manner. This approach to health budgeting and reform was shared by legislators on both sides of the aisle, as well as by hospital leaders, who attended a series of legislative/press briefings (February 19 and 20) sponsored by the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council (NSHC).

"We need to use the federal funding to hold hospitals and education harmless," said State Senator Brian Foley. "Then we need to use money to reform health care [reimbursement system] in the next few years. Then we'll have used our time and money well."

"Hospitals have already sustained two rounds of cuts in this fiscal year – about one billion dollars statewide," said Kevin Dahill, president/CEO of the NSHC, the association that represents Long Island's hospitals. "We're reasonably asking for an offset of the proposed cuts so that an industry that has proven itself to be an economic engine, offering stable, local jobs, can remain so."

The U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis has indicated that hospitals on Long Island contribute \$13 billion to the local economy through tax revenue and direct and indirect spending. About 85,000 people are employed by Long Island's hospitals.

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“Everything you hear about the stimulus package is about creating jobs. You have an industry in this state producing billions in economic benefit. So, it appears that you would do what you should to avoid further catastrophe,” said Joseph Quagliata, CEO of South Nassau Communities Hospital (Oceanside, NY) and president-elect of the Healthcare Association of New York State. “FMAP dollars (Federal Medical Assistance Percentage) are tied to Medicaid, so it makes sense to at least make hospitals whole.”

“Health care is a critical component in our economy,” said State Senator Kenneth LaValle. “If we took pieces out of health care and education, we would be in deep, deep trouble.”

Long Islanders can log onto the website www.helpyourhospital.org and enter their zip codes to get a dollar and cents view of what the \$64 million Medicaid cuts to Long Island’s hospitals would mean to their local hospitals and communities.



Legislative/Press Briefing held Friday, February 20, 2009 at Good Samaritan Hospital (West Islip, NY) From left: William Allison, President/CEO of Good Sam; State Senator Brian Foley; Gordan Canary from State Senator Owen Johnson’s office; Elizabeth Kennedy from Assemblywoman Patricia Eddington’s office; Assemblyman Philip Boyle;

Kevin Dahill, President/CEO of the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council; Charles Bove, Sr VP, Administration at Good Sam.



Legislative/Press Briefing held Thursday, February 19, 2009 at John T. Mather Memorial Hospital (Port Jefferson, NY). From left: Ken Roberts, President/CEO of Mather Hospital; Kevin Dahill, President/CEO of the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council; Dr. Steven Strongwater, CEO of Stony Brook University Hospital; State Senator Kenneth LaValle; Assemblyman Stephen Englebright; Jim O'Connor, Executive Vice President, St. Charles Hospital; Sharon Kennish, Executive Director of St. Catherine of Siena Hospital; and Paul Connor, CEO of Eastern Long Island Hospital.





Legislative/Press Briefing held Thursday, February 19, 2009, Nassau University Medical Center (East Meadow, NY). From left: Kevin Dahill, President/CEO of the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council; State Senator Kemp Hannon; Arthur Gianelli, President/CEO of Nassau University Medical Center.