

HTNYS' TRUSTEE REGIONAL PROGRAMS EXPLAIN HOW TRUSTEES CAN HELP WITH ADVOCACY

February 15—HTNYS and **Rochester Regional Healthcare Association** will host a program at The Belhurst in **Geneva** from 4 to 7 p.m.

February 16—HTNYS and **Iroquois Healthcare Association** will hold a program at The Doubletree in **Syracuse** from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

February 22—HTNYS and **Iroquois Healthcare Association** will hold a program at The Desmond Hotel in **Albany** from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Registration is available online at www.htnys.org.

HTNYS AVAILABLE FOR BOARD CONSULTATION

HTNYS staff are available upon request to make presentations to hospital and continuing care governing boards on a variety of policy, health reform, and governance issues. Presentations can be conducted in person or via telephone or Webconference.



Healthcare Trustees
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TRUSTEE ENGAGEMENT IN ADVOCACY IS CRUCIAL

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On February 1, Governor Andrew Cuomo released his proposed state budget, which, if enacted, would be devastating for health care providers. The total impact of the Governor's proposed Medicaid cuts would be approximately \$15 billion over two years, including lost federal matching funds.

Even within the context of the current fiscal crisis, the magnitude of these cuts is staggering.

HTNYS AND HANYS ARE MAKING IT CLEAR THAT HOSPITALS AND OTHER PROVIDERS IN NEW YORK STATE CANNOT WITHSTAND THIS LEVEL OF CUTS WHILE PROVIDING QUALITY CARE AND TRANSFORMING HEALTH CARE DELIVERY ALL AT THE SAME TIME.

The \$15 billion represents the total impact on Medicaid spending. The budget lacks the traditional details normally provided, but the cuts on hospitals, nursing homes, and home care appear to be in the neighborhood of 10% to 15% in each of the next two years.

The budget relies on the Governor's Medicaid Redesign Team (MRT) to identify, by March 1, 2011, initiatives to reduce Medicaid spending by \$2.85 billion. Healthcare Association of New York State (HANYS) President Daniel Sisto is a member of the Governor's MRT and agrees that a fundamental redesign is necessary. However, he has expressed concern about the expectation that the MRT can identify alternative reforms to substitute for this level of reduction.

The Governor's budget gives the Commissioner of Health authority to accept or reject the MRT recommendations and to develop and implement cuts if more savings are necessary to meet the \$2.85 billion target.

The Governor enters the budget debate with an aggressive agenda, a pledge not to raise taxes, and strong public support. With a state deficit estimated at \$10 billion, the Governor and Legislature will be challenged to reach a budget agreement on taxes, education, health care, and a host of other issues by April 1.

I urge trustees across the state to engage in advocacy and tell their stories about how detrimental the cuts will be to their communities.

Sue Ellen Wagner
Executive Director



TRUSTEES MUST ACTIVELY ENGAGE IN ADVOCACY

Trustees provide a unique advocacy perspective—one that is highly respected by legislators.

Members of the New York State Legislature need to hear from their community leaders about the sheer devastation these cuts will have on their local hospitals, health systems, and continuing care providers.

If there is not strong push-back from the health care provider community, many in government will conclude that the Governor's proposed budget is acceptable or tolerable.

If you are not actively engaging your elected representatives to make clear what is and what is not acceptable, they will not feel accountable to you or your issue.

Policymakers, the media, and public must hear and understand two very important things:

- Previous cuts to health care providers have not fixed the underlying problems that are leading to high Medicaid costs. Further cuts will close institutions, compromise access, cost jobs, and weaken health care in communities across the state.
- We have alternatives to across-the-board health care cuts that should be used to redesign Medicaid, improve quality, and lower costs.

PLAN TO ATTEND:

HANYS'/HTNYS' HEALTH CARE LEADERSHIP ADVOCACY DAY

Please plan to attend the HANYS/HTNYS/Allied Association Leadership Advocacy Day on March 9 in Albany. Work with your hospital leadership to attend and meet with your legislators. We also need you to meet with your legislators in their home districts before Advocacy Day.

Additional details on Advocacy Day will be forthcoming on www.htnys.org.

This year, more than ever, it is critical to have strong and ongoing grassroots advocacy on the state budget. A single telephone call, letter, or visit is simply not enough. We need you to work with your facility chief executive officer to ensure that at every step of the process your legislator has your facility on his or her mind.

ADVOCACY MESSAGES FOR TRUSTEES

- The Medicaid and health care savings targets in Governor Cuomo's budget are extreme and unachievable.
- HANYS is contributing constructive recommendations for improving the health care system through the Medicaid reform process.
- No other sector of state spending has been more disproportionately impacted by repeated cuts than health care. In just three years, health care providers have endured a cumulative \$5.3 billion in Medicaid reductions. The single first year impact of the proposals (\$5.9 billion) is almost three times the annualized impact on providers of the past three years of budget actions (about \$2 billion per year).
- Our state is also slated for billions in cuts in Medicare payments under the new federal reform law.
- If the proposed additional \$15 billion in Medicaid reductions over the next two years become law, we will see a continuation of hospital and nursing home closures, adding to the 30 hospitals and more than 50 nursing homes that have already been shuttered in the last decade.

HTNYS' Advocacy Web page provides an array of information to assist you in your advocacy efforts. For more information, go to www.htnys.org/advocacy.

