

Dear Assemblywoman Silver:

As a constituent and a SUNY employee, I am writing about the 2005-06 Executive Budget Proposal as it concerns the SUNY hospitals.

The proposed cuts to Medicaid funding would directly and negatively impact New York State's public hospitals. The proposed \$1.5 billion "cost containment" would force a reduction in services. These funding cuts would not only reduce the quality of health care, but put SUNY's important public health mission at risk and threaten the quality of medical education and research in New York.

I also urge you to reject the plans to transfer the SUNY hospitals to a private, not-for-profit corporation status. The privatization of the SUNY hospitals is unnecessary. There are compelling reasons for New York State to continue to manage and promote these institutions. Currently, the hospitals are directly accountable to the SUNY Board of Trustees, the Governor, and the people of the State of New York. Should these centers be restructured and privatized, New York State and its citizens would surrender direct oversight, and medical education and the current level of clinical care would be at risk.

Another problem in the Executive Budget Proposal is the .7 percent "sick tax" on the gross hospital revenues. When combined with cuts in Medicaid funding, the "sick tax" would destabilize these invaluable public institutions, leading to program cuts, layoffs and reduced services for New York's citizens. The estimated impact of this so-called "sick tax" on Downstate Medical in Brooklyn is \$1.4 million; for Stony Brook HSC it is \$2.8 million, and for Upstate Medical in Syracuse the hit is \$1.8 million. When combined with proposed cuts in Medicaid funding and graduate medical education, the combined budget hit is \$6.7 million for Syracuse, \$9.1 million for Stony Brook and \$11.7 million for Brooklyn.

Together, we must work to keep the promise of SUNY's hospitals to the people of New York State.

I would appreciate a response to this letter.

Thank you.

Sincerely,