



**Cornell University
Cooperative Extension
of Delaware County**

Rural Healthcare Alliance

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**New York State Joint Legislative Public Hearing on
2015-16 Executive Health Budget
Monday, February 2nd, 2015
10:00 AM**

Chairs:

Senator Kemp Hannon

Assemblyman Richard Gottfried

On behalf of the Delaware County Rural Healthcare Alliance please accept the attached testimony from 18 nonprofit members of our Rural Health Network encouraging separation of Rural Health Network Development programs from Health Workforce Development as proposed in the 2015-16 Executive Budget. We would respectfully suggest that these two programs be restored to individual budget lines at level funding for 2015-16.

The Delaware County Rural Healthcare Alliance brings together health care and health care related organizations to share information, conduct assessments, develop plans and fund projects to address health education and awareness. The Alliance promotes improved access to quality health and wellness services for Delaware County residents.

As a Rural Health network we are an integral part of facilitating and delivering a wide range of services to support the system transformation that the State is driving through the Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment Program (DSRIP) and the Prevention Agenda.

The Delaware County Rural Healthcare Network Development Program Workplan provides the following for three of our workplan initiatives:

Rural Health Services Capacity Building: Increase the capacity of DCRHA, network partners, and Delaware County community-based organizations to collect, analyze and disseminate data for rural health services improvement. **Disaster/Accident Preparedness-** Improve the county's ability to respond to individual and community-wide calamities.

- The Delaware County Rural Healthcare Alliance has funded and helped develop online required certification for 223 EMS emergency lifesaving volunteers in Delaware County worth \$500,000 to the county per year. Currently our Rural Healthcare Alliance is helping to develop a Smartphone Disaster APP for Delaware County with Cornell and offer disaster training to communities.

Mental Health Care – Increase the availability/use/effectiveness of peer-based mental health services.

- Two schools are implementing a suicide prevention program for youth. 40 peer youth leaders and adult coaches received training on "Sources of Strength", an evidence based program out of the University of Rochester. Franklin Central School has been selected for a "Sources of Strength" Research project with the University of Rochester. Through a suicide coalition program another 253 other students participated in a suicide

prevention training in 11 schools. A "Warm Line" for mental health issues has been taking phone calls weekly in the county thanks to startup funding from the Delaware County Rural Healthcare Alliance. A conference on Alzheimer's disease reaching 130 people and a Recovery Coach program is now offering mental health and drug abuse counseling to 42 inmates in the Delaware County Correctional facility.

Chronic Disease Prevention – Coordinate whole-community approach/mapping to reduce risk factors related to heart disease and obesity.

- The Delaware County Rural Healthcare Alliance has completed a 10 week Heart Health Walking Study with women including "Matters of Your Heart" workshops on heart attack signs and heart disease. Educational programs for youth to prevent obesity have reached 1086 youth through 5210 CATCH programs, Mileage Club, Girls On The Run, Cooking Up Fun, Choose Health and school gardening lessons. Fitness trails have been opened in Delhi along with a Prescription Trails website/program for collaborating hospitals.

We hope you will give every consideration to this request to unbundle the Rural Health Network Funding from Workforce (they do not belong in the same budget line) and restore Rural Health Network funding to \$6.4 million and Rural Access to \$9.8 million.

Thank you for the opportunity to share this request with you. Best wishes as you engage in this challenging and important work of supporting healthcare system transformation in New York State.

Sincerely,



Jeanne M. Darling, Executive Director
Cornell Cooperative Extension
Delaware County Rural Healthcare Alliance