

BECAUSE IT TAKES MORE THAN FOOD TO FEED THE HUNGRY



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January 26, 2014

The Honorable John DeFrancisco
New York State Senator, District 50
Chair of the Senate Finance Committee
416 Capitol
Albany, NY 12247

Re: Testimony for the February 2nd Joint Legislative Hearing on Health/Medicaid

Dear Senator DeFrancisco,

The Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program (HPNAP) is dedicated to improving the health and nutritional well-being of people in need of food assistance in New York State by providing Long Island Cares, Inc. with approximately \$1.8 million. This funding allows us to: provide grant funding and technical support to enhance the accessibility of safe and nutritious food and food related resources; develop and provide comprehensive nutrition and health education programs; monitor needs and issues related to food insecurity to strengthen program effectiveness; and deliver nearly 2 million pounds of food to our 600 member agencies that support our neighbors in need.

We respectfully request that funding for the Department of Health's HPNAP program be increased by \$10 million to a SFY 2015-16 funding line of \$40 million. This increase comprises: 1) Base lining and annualizing the \$28 million SFY 2014-15 HPNAP award; 2) Base lining and annualizing of the \$2 million TANF allocation for emergency food in the SFY 2014-15 executive budget; 3) Base lining and annualizing a \$10 million HPNAP emergency food allocation exclusively for New York State's 8 recognized regional food banks in SFY 2015-16.

The state funds provided pursuant to HPNAP will also assist us in improving the quality of food distributed to the estimated 600 emergency food relief organizations which we serve, including food pantries, homeless shelters, soup



kitchens, and child care centers. This funding also provides much of the food supporting our region's first Mobile School Pantry in partnership with the Brentwood Union Free School District which is now feeding 440 families from Long Island's largest school district on a regular basis. HPNAP support was also instrumental in the development of our new Long Island Cares, Inc.—The Harry Chapin Food Bank and Humanitarian Center which opened at 220 Broadway in Huntington Station on November 3, 2014. This new location not only addresses the needs of a distressed local community for emergency food and community support services, it is also the permanent home of our Veterans Outreach Department tasked with job development, community education, and information and referral services for veterans and military families. Current HPNAP regulations require Long Island Cares to purchase highly nutritious products including low fat, high fiber, low salt, and low sugar foods that carry a much higher cost to procure. Under the current \$28 million baseline funding level New York's food banks are unable to stretch this critical state funding without negatively impacting other aspects of our overall operations.

We will continue to provide over 7.5 million pounds of food, personal care items, and household supplies to over 316,000 food insecure Long Islanders despite these challenging restrictions and increased demand. In fact, 90 percent of our agencies reported an increase in demand for services in our 2013 Distribution and Capacity Survey with our median agency serving between 51-75 clients each week. It is no wonder that in the past 4 years we went from supporting 550 agencies to now supplying over 600 agencies with desperately needed emergency food. Please afford us, their regional food bank, the capacity to support them even more. Thank you for advocating on our behalf of, and fighting to protect, our state's food insecure population and for your continued support of Long Island Cares.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paule T. Pachter". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P".

Paule T. Pachter, A.C.S.W., L.M.S.W.
Chief Executive Officer