



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Malcolm Smith

State Budget Offers Remedies To Health Care In New York

MALCOLM A. SMITH April 2, 2008

ALBANY, NY – April 2, 2008 – State lawmakers and groups focused on health care-related issues are applauding the Health and Mental Hygiene portion of the state budget. The \$400 million package is designed to improve the lives of New Yorkers across the state as it restores proposed cuts and invests in primary and preventive care for the future.

Senate Democratic Leader Malcolm A. Smith announced the new health care budget achieves several major goals including: an historic shift of resources towards primary care and preventive health, more than \$300 million per year in new investments in primary and preventive care, giving a boost to hospital outpatient clinics, community health centers and local primary care doctors. Reforms in this budget will expand patient access to family physicians, improve the quality of care for the indigent and save money for the taxpayers by preventing high-cost illnesses and reducing overpayments.

"The health care portion of the state budget is a big step in the right direction," said Smith (D – St. Albans). "This measure will help more New Yorkers receive better health care with lower health care costs for taxpayers because of early detection and treatment of diseases like diabetes, asthma and HIV / AIDS. The new Doctors Across New York initiative encourages doctors to practice in underserved areas. We're getting more children covered in the Child

Health Plus program. This measure clearly makes us a healthier New York."

This budget also helps the state's growing elderly population by providing for a new EPIC discount card for New Yorker who are between the ages of 50 and 64 and New Yorkers with disabilities at any age.

The budget also restores proposed pharmacy reimbursement cuts in an effort to boost local and independent pharmacies supporting essential health care in their communities.

Although many of the proposed cuts to health care have been restored in this budget Senator Smith acknowledges that across-the-board cuts are still a cause for concern.