



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas K. Duane

## Senate Health Chair Thomas K. Duane Announces Agreement On Health Budget

THOMAS K. DUANE April 1, 2009

| COMMITTEE: **HEALTH**

Senator Duane restores over \$800 million in health care cuts; saves epic pharmacy coverage, touts preventative health.

Albany, New York – In his first year as chair of the Senate Committee on Health, Senator Thomas K. Duane (D WFP-Manhattan) announced that an agreement has been reached on the health portion of the New York State budget – one of the largest appropriations in the budget.

Despite a receding economy and a major budget crisis, Senator Duane was proud to have been able to secure necessary and critical healthcare funding for New Yorkers: "I am proud that we were able to restore over \$800 million in healthcare cuts proposed in the Executive's budget. Making sure New Yorkers have access to quality healthcare has been a priority for me throughout my career and I fought hard to try to make healthcare in this state more affordable and accessible. Restorations such as New York State's Elderly Pharmaceutical Insurance Coverage (EPIC) program's 'wrap around' coverage which pays for needed drugs not covered by Medicare Part D plans, as well as new allocations for hospitals and community-based health clinics will certainly help save lives."

Highlights of the healthcare budget include:

- A new Senate initiative to support community-based health clinics which will provide \$127 million in funding.
- Reforms to the healthcare system to shift away from the expensive model of treating people after they have become ill to preventative care. As part of this reform, over \$500 million in transitional funding has been provided to ease the changes healthcare facilities will make.
- Nearly \$75 million in new money for hospitals statewide in addition to \$25 million for academic medical centers, \$24.5 million for safety net hospitals and \$24.2 million for high-Medicaid hospitals.
- Preservation of the Elderly Pharmaceutical Insurance Coverage (EPIC) program's "wrap-around," which pays for specific categories of prescription drugs not covered by Medicare drug plans.

"As an advocate for access to primary care and preventative medicine, ensuring that we use our Medicaid dollars as wisely as we can in these difficult economic times was a priority for me in this budget. I believe that we have made hard decisions that will break down barriers to treatment for New Yorkers and will ultimately set us on a more sustainable path for healthcare in this state," Senator Duane said.

The budget is expected to be voted on before the full Senate on Tuesday, March 31, 2009.