



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Gustavo Rivera

## Senator Rivera's Response to Governor Cuomo's State of the State Address

GUSTAVO RIVERA January 9, 2020

| ISSUE: **STATE OF THE STATE, HEALTH**

"After the Governor's State of the State address yesterday, it is fair to say that we were left with more questions than answers. I am greatly concerned that the Governor did not present any details or an overall strategy on how our State is planning to tackle the astronomical \$6 billion budget shortfall we are currently facing, \$4 billion of which pertains to Medicaid. I find it very concerning that the only vague solutions that have been floated to fill this deficit hole are either passing the buck to already cash-strapped localities or slashing reimbursement rates to struggling medical providers. I believe we should not discuss cuts to essential medical services without strongly considering new revenue streams, such as raising taxes for the wealthiest among us."

"As Chair of the Health Committee and Co-Chair of the Senate Task Force on Opioids, Addiction and Overdose Prevention, I found it quite troublesome that the Governor put more emphasis on vaping, which certainly is a public health issue to tackle, while largely ignoring the ever-present opioid crisis, which has claimed the lives of so many New Yorkers. Instead, he outlined changes to drug schedules that might drive more people to prison, a measure far and apart from the bold initiatives needed to keep New Yorkers from dying."

"On the other hand, while not mentioned during his speech, it is encouraging that the written materials attached to his presentation included a number of health policies that resemble legislation I carry and consider a priority. From regulating pharmacy benefit managers to making insulin affordable and accessible, to protecting New Yorkers from being saddled with astronomical medical debt, I look forward to potentially working on all of these issues during this year."

"Our State is facing serious challenges that require a bold vision. While we need to be pragmatic, the status quo does not serve New Yorkers well. I look forward to seeing and reviewing the Governor's actual budget proposal and fighting to ensure we secure what New Yorkers deserve."

Video with the Senator's response to the State of the State [here](#).