



MEMORANDUM

Date: January 4, 2010

To: Senator Charles E. Schumer

From: Barry Liebowitz, M.D., President *Barry Liebowitz M.D.*

Re: National Healthcare Reform Legislation – **WE NEED YOUR VOICE NOW!**

On behalf of the unionized doctors in public hospitals and clinics throughout New York City – and the thousands of New York’s neediest patients that we treat every day – Doctors Council SEIU urges you to cure the toxic Senate version of National Healthcare Reform legislation before it is too late.

There’s no question that this legislation contains important advances such as covering 30 million uninsured and ensuring that those with pre-existing medical conditions can get coverage. But the first thing you learn in medical school is: **FIRST, DO NO HARM.**

The Senate has ignored that prescription when it comes to New York, which boasts one of the best public hospital systems in the United States. All New Yorkers should be proud that our public healthcare systems has been extraordinarily effective in providing the basic human right of healthcare to ALL - regardless of insurance or immigration status. But now, the Senate is placing this system - and the millions who rely on it – in jeopardy.

Under the Senate bill, New York loses the increased Medicaid funding provided to other states. It adds policies that will impose an additional \$1billion in annual Medicaid costs on New York. The Mayor and Governor estimate that to offset these costs will require a 15% reduction in payments to every hospital, nursing home, home health agency and community clinic.

In addition, the Senate bill will cut between \$800 million to more than \$1billion a year in DSH (Medicaid Disproportionate Share Hospital) payments to safety net hospitals that provide care to the uninsured. These cuts will wreak havoc with the New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation (HHC) and force it to close clinics and other critical healthcare services. The Mayor has called this bill “a disgrace” and we agree.

Doctors Council SEIU urges you not to punish New York for having one of the best public healthcare systems in America. **We demand that you eliminate the Senate bill’s onerous and unfair burdens placed on New York City and negotiate a conference bill that is fair for New York.**