

JOHN L. SAMPSON
MINORITY LEADER

THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK



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Honorable Dean Skelos, Majority Leader
New York State Capitol
Albany, New York 12247

Dear Majority Leader Skelos:

New York stands to lose tens of millions in Federal funding to implement a State-run Health Care Exchange. Given New York's precarious fiscal state, we are in no position to risk losing much needed Federal money that will allow over one million individually uninsured New Yorkers and small business employees to have health insurance coverage and regular access to health care.

Governor Cuomo made clear in his State of the State message the importance of establishing this Health Care Exchange right away. The Governor pointed out that almost 16 percent of all New Yorkers under the age of 65 — 2.7 million people — are uninsured. We have a unique opportunity to address this challenge by developing a New York State Health Insurance Exchange that will be financed entirely by the Federal government. When the Exchange is implemented, potentially more than one million New Yorkers will be able to access health coverage.

Additionally, the Governor estimates that those who currently purchase health insurance coverage on their own in the private marketplace would see the cost of their coverage drop by 66%. Moreover, the cost of coverage currently borne by employers would drop by up to 22%. The enactment of the legislation would also bring in an estimated \$18 billion more in Federal Medicaid matching funds to the State over the next ten years.

It is crucial that we heed Governor Cuomo's advice and act quickly.

Last June the Governor and legislative leaders, including, as we understand it, members of your Conference, agreed to take the first step in complying with Federal law by creating the structure of this Exchange. Legislation introduced last spring would have set up a process by which the State could begin accessing urgently needed Federal funds. Before a vote on such legislation took place, however, something must have occurred within the Republican conference that derailed Senate action.



This issue is about providing millions of uninsured New Yorkers with the opportunity to access quality health care. As you know, if we do not create our own Exchange, the Federal government will step in and do it for us. New York would be better served by setting up its own Exchange based on what New Yorkers need. Neglecting to set up an Exchange denies health coverage to New Yorkers who need it.

We have delayed too long; we believe we must work out a bi-partisan agreement on this issue. We hope you will make this our Senate priority and pass this important legislation in a bi-partisan manner right away.

Sincerely,



Senator John L. Sampson
Democratic Leader



Senator Neil D. Breslin
Deputy Democratic Leader



Senator Thomas K. Duane
Ranking Democrat, Senate Health Committee