



ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATIVE NEWS

ULSTER COUNTY NEWS INFORMATION
OFFICE OF ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATURE
244 FAIR STREET
KINGSTON, NEW YORK, 12401

PHONE: 845.340-3900
FAX: 845.340.3651
www.co.ulster.ny.us
www.ulstercountyny.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT: Legislator Walter G. Frey, Jr.
(917) 544-3797
wfry@co.ulster.ny.us

United We Stand

Ulster County Legislature Urges US Congress to Equalize the Medicare Reimbursement for Hospitals in Ulster County

Setting the tone that Ulster County Hospitals are underfunded compared to those of Southern and Eastern counties, the UC Legislature, in a bipartisan effort, unanimously approved a memorializing resolution to bring equality to the Medicare reimbursement rates for the hospitals in Ulster County. The people of Ulster County are losing \$10 million per year with the current lower Medicare Hospital Reimbursement.

A September 2009 report by the HealthAlliance of the Hudson Valley conveyed the following:

- Average wages in Ulster County hospitals have fallen below 85% of peer hospital wages
- Hospital workers in Ulster County have not received wage increases in two years
- Due to the years of inequity, salaries in Ulster County have fallen below the threshold to remain in the Poughkeepsie/Newburgh MSA
- Ulster County hospitals are economically disadvantaged while surrounding hospitals in adjoining counties are experiencing significant gains
- Ulster County hospitals have an extremely difficult time recruiting and retaining nurses
- Ulster County hospitals are performing the same procedures as in adjacent counties and receiving significantly different reimbursement (in many cases, these procedures are performed by exactly the same physicians)

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The above information combined with the fact that Ulster and Dutchess Counties are equidistant from the New York City metropolitan area establish a valid argument for Ulster County hospitals to be reimbursed at the same rate as Dutchess County hospitals.

Health and Human Services Committee Chairman Walter Frey commented, “We ask County Executive Michael Hein to stand with the Ulster County Legislature and speak to our federally elected officials to end this disparity.”