



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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ALL SIX FEDERALLY QUALIFIED HEALTH CENTERS ACROSS THE FINGER LAKES REGION PROTEST THE LOSS OF \$250M

Trillium Health, Jordan Health, Oak Orchard Health, Finger Lakes Community Health, His Branches, and Mosaic Health urge Governor Cuomo to reverse or delay a state budget item that would have devastating effects on communities of color, LGBTQ+ communities, and people living with HIV

ROCHESTER, NY (March 23, 2021) – With only a few days left in the state budget process, community health centers across new New York State are protesting against the loss of \$250 million, which would result in an immediate disruption of services to hundreds of thousands of the most vulnerable New Yorkers and the loss of thousands of jobs. Without a change in the state budget, the cuts will go into effect on April 1. In the Finger Lakes Region, all six Federally Qualified Health Centers serving the Greater Rochester area – Trillium Health, Jordan Health, Oak Orchard Health, Finger Lakes Community Health, His Branches, and Mosaic Health – are urgently calling on Governor Cuomo to work with the Legislature to reverse or delay the cuts.

The 340B prescription drug program is a federal program that allows community health centers and Ryan white clinics in medically-underserved areas to purchase outpatient prescription drugs at reduced prices. By law, these providers are required to use the savings to fund life-saving programs – such as food, housing, and transportation – in addition to providing prescription drugs to patients at little-to-no cost.

However, Governor Cuomo wants to usurp that money and use it to help close the state's budget deficit. The New York State Assembly and the New York State Senate have included in their one-house budgets a demand to reject or delay the changes to the 340B program. The Rochester Area Delegation in the New York State Legislature has been extremely supportive of the safety net providers, and are calling upon the Governor to include the changes in the 3-way budget agreement before April 1.

Assemblyman Harry B. Bronson (D-Rochester), said:

“Trillium Health, Jordan Health, Oak Orchard Health, University of Rochester Health and so many other health service providers across our state are ever more important during the coronavirus pandemic. These are safety-net health providers that serve all patients regardless of ability to pay. They serve some of the most vulnerable in our community. The federal 340B Drug Discount Program protects providers from drug price increases and gives them access to pharmaceuticals at discount prices. Funding derived from 340B is a vital lifeline for these healthcare facilities and their patients supporting critical care that is both visible to patients in the exam room as well as the invisible infrastructure that improves health outcomes. 340B supports investments in growth of patient services and programs. Providers also rely on this funding to operate food pantries, provide transportation assistance, STI screenings, mental health and wellness programs, and run harm reduction programs – services that are in extremely high-demand due to the pandemic. If the 340B program is not maintained, many patients here in Rochester and across New York State will simply have nowhere to turn. These are not savings that should be made on the backs of the most vulnerable --those who can ill afford these cuts. Especially, in the midst of a global pandemic and economic crisis, which we know has disproportionately impacted people of color. My colleagues and I have called on the governor to reverse his so-called savings plan before it has a devastating and tragic impact on patients.”

Andrea DeMeo, President and CEO of Trillium Health, said:

“It is unconscionable that healthcare resources for safety net providers like Trillium Health are in jeopardy of being slashed in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic. Governor Cuomo’s budget proposal to carve out the Medicaid 340B benefit will immediately cut life-saving and enabling programs for hundreds of thousands of individuals and families in our community and across the state who have low-incomes or are living in poverty.”

Dr. Laurie Donohue, Chief Medical Officer of Jordan Health, said:

“We are pleased that both the State Senate and Assembly have agreed to delay or reverse the drastic change to the 340B drug program in their budgets. We urge its inclusion in the final state budget to be signed by the Governor. The loss of 340B revenue, especially during a pandemic, would have a devastating impact on community health centers like Jordan Health and our patients. Services would be lost, clinical sites would be closed, and the health of our community jeopardized.”

Mary Ann Pettibon, President and CEO of Oak Orchard Health, said:

“Oak Orchard Health, along with the other FQHC’s in our region, are the safety net providers for the medically underserved populations in our regions. Our patients have come to rely on the services which we provide, and which they cannot obtain elsewhere due to

costs and other socioeconomic barriers. Without the benefit of 340B savings, our patients' access to care will be significantly diminished."

Mary Zelazny, CEO of Finger Lakes Community Health, said:

"The 340B program is a lifeline to our very vulnerable patients for their medicines, as well as with the ability of Community Health Centers to continue in our mission to provide critical healthcare services to our communities."

Mike Weston, Executive Director, His Branches, said:

"Our ability to provide accessible and affordable health care for the vulnerable living in Rochester's underserved neighborhoods is dependent upon continued access to 340B savings. Without these funds, the health equity community health centers like ours seek to correct, will only continue to widen."

Michael Leary, President and CEO, Mosaic Health, said:

"The 340B program is an essential part of keeping the FQHC safety net financially sound. The program enables us to continue providing comprehensive, high quality care to our patients. Any reduction to the 340B program, including New York State's proposed carve-out of the pharmacy benefit from managed care, strains the finances of health centers and endangers our ability to serve New York's most vulnerable residents."

For more information about the Finger Lakes Region's Federally Qualified Health Centers, please visit:

<https://www.trilliumhealth.org/>

<https://www.jordanhealth.org/>

<https://oakorchardhealth.org/>

<https://www.localcommunityhealth.com/>

<https://hisbranches.org/>

<https://mosaichealth.org/>

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