



**NEW YORK STATE ASSOCIATION  
OF COUNTY HEALTH OFFICIALS**

*Leading the Way to Healthier Communities*

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**NYSACHO PRESIDENT DR. IRINA GELMAN TESTIFIES ON  
NYSACHO'S 2024-25 STATE BUDGET PUBLIC HEALTH PRIORITIES**

(Albany, New York) New York State Association of County Health Officials (NYSACHO) President Dr. Irina Gelman today will testify before the joint legislative hearing on the health and public health components of the 2024-25 Executive Budget proposal.

Dr. Gelman, who also serves as Commissioner of Health for Nassau County, will share with lawmakers numerous concerns related to inadequate allocations and fiscal reductions proposed in the budget that impact a number of critical public health responsibilities.

In her testimony Dr. Gelman states “Local health departments serve as the first line of defense for population-based prevention strategies including communicable and chronic disease response, community outreach, food and water safety, environmental health services, emergency preparedness and so much more.”

Public health programs at risk for cuts or elimination from the state budget include: lead poisoning prevention; services for rabies prevention and treatment; HIV prevention; cancer programming; tickborne disease illness and tobacco prevention and control, among others. In addition, Dr. Gelman will discuss the statewide impact of workforce shortages at local public health departments that jeopardize emergency response capacity, service delivery and necessitate additional state support.

There are several elements of the Executive proposal that are supported by NYSACHO, including: changes to how New York combats hepatitis B and C, HIV and syphilis; expansion of health care professionals who can administer immunizations; new tools to address infant mortality; and expanded efforts to respond to the overdose epidemic.

Dr. Gelman’s testimony also expresses support for a proposed rate increase for Early Intervention (EI) program providers which is a needed step toward sustaining this program and helping children with special health care needs and their families. While NYSACHO supports this increase, it is imperative that this increase is paid using state funding, leaving the counties harmless from the fiscal increase. The EI program is experiencing severe provider shortages, underfunding and growing service waitlists. In addition to this rate increase, Dr. Gelman shares concerns about funding that is owed to

counties from an early intervention covered lives assessment that was enacted in 2021 and questions administrative actions planned to service reimbursement that could further jeopardize the program.

She will testify: “Public health officials understand that lean times require a strict application of two key budgeting measures...impact and value. We must ask, where will our investment of limited public funds be most impactful, and how can we ensure the taxpayer is getting value from that investment?”

“Evidence clearly shows an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Every dollar we invest in public health has an extraordinary impact on preventing illnesses, and reducing expenditures associated with the medical and clinical care necessary to treat those illnesses,” Dr. Gelman will testify.

NYSACHO’s full budget testimony can be found at [https://www.nysacho.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/NYSACHO\\_submitted\\_health\\_budget\\_testimony\\_24.pdf](https://www.nysacho.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/NYSACHO_submitted_health_budget_testimony_24.pdf)

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