



State of the State Address Fact Sheet: **Doctors Across New York**

“There are huge regions of New York where doctors are scarce... From our inner cities to the North Country, our medically underserved New Yorkers deserve better...To attract doctors to these communities, we’re going to create a “Peace Corps” for doctors.”

-Governor Eliot Spitzer (January 9, 2008)

The Challenge

- There is a serious shortage of physicians in rural and poor urban areas throughout New York. Over ¼ of the State’s population live in areas designated “underserved” by proper health care providers.
- The Department of Health estimates that over 300 primary care physicians are needed in these areas just to no longer be classified as Health Professional Shortage Areas (more than 3,500 people for each physician).
- Not only do we have shortages of primary care physicians, but many areas have shortages of critical specialists. Eight counties have no OB/GYNs practicing obstetrics; the Southern Tier has seen an 18% reduction in OB/GYNs from 2001-2005; the Mohawk Valley has seen an 18% decline in surgeons and Western New York has seen a 16% decline in surgeons over the same time period.
- 50% of resident physicians leave New York State after completing their training.
- Currently, the State offers a limited program that partially pays for the education loans of physicians who practice in underserved areas. The Regents Physician Loan Forgiveness Program provides up to \$10,000 per year for two years. With doctors graduating medical school with loans easily reaching \$150,000, however, this program does not provide a sufficient incentive.

Our Approach

- The Governor’s Executive Budget will propose programs to provide physicians and clinics grants and enhanced reimbursement rates designed to encourage new primary care and specialist physicians to establish or join existing practices in rural and inner-city underserved communities.
- Specifically, the Budget will propose a new educational loan repayment program tied to service in underserved communities.
- The Administration will work with our teaching hospitals and medical schools to support programs for residents who agree to practice in underserved areas by accessing both the Physician Loan repayment program and Physician Practice Support funding.