

## **Postponed**

The City Council's health committee hearings to delve into Mayor Bill de Blasio's budget on topics related to the Office of the Medical Examiner, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and the city's public hospitals were postponed because Chairman Corey Johnson's sister had a baby in Massachusetts.

## **Today in Health**

The city's Health + Hospitals finance committee meets at 1 p.m.

## **Nuclear subsidy could raise electric bills for hospitals**

By Josefa Velasquez

ALBANY — Gov. Andrew Cuomo's plan to bail out upstate nuclear plants could end up raising electricity expenditures for health systems around the state by at least \$13.4 million, according to a report by a consumer utility advocacy group.

According to the Public Utilities Law Project, the tab for health systems could go as high as \$33.5 million annually during the first two years of the 12-year subsidy.

Northwell Health, the sprawling health system based on Long Island, could see its electricity expenditures increase between \$2.15 million and \$5.39 million, the most of any other health system, according to the report.

Since health care facilities have such slight margins, any increase in costs will hurt the bottom line, said Michael Rohan, the director of engineering and infrastructure development at Northwell.

"Hospitals are among the greatest [energy] users," Rohan said, noting that they're never closed and air constantly needs to be purified. As a result, the annual electric bill for Northwell is somewhere in the range of \$100 million.

"We never shut down and we have very intensive operations. The ICU and all of the equipment inside the hospitals and the need for the heating and cooling ... we're always lit," Rohan said.

The New York City Health + Hospital could see their annual electric bills increase between roughly \$1.63 million and \$4.07 million, according to the report. The agency did not respond to a request for comment.

The Cuomo administration may spend as much as \$7.6 billion over the next 12 years, according to PULP's estimate, to help keep the aging nuclear power plants open. The money will ultimately come from ratepayers, including hospitals, manufacturers, local governments, schools and households.

Cuomo officials have said the subsidy is necessary to prevent the abrupt shut down of the nuclear plants because they'd likely be replaced with fossil fuels and energy costs would increase. Every energy user should pay for the bailout because everyone in the state benefits from the avoided greenhouse gas emissions, administration officials have said.

The nuclear subsidy starts on April 1.

Read the report [here](#).

## **Cuomo, Collins trade barbs over Medicaid amendment**

By Dan Goldberg

Gov. Andrew Cuomo and Rep. Chris Collins traded jabs Monday night over a Medicaid amendment expected to be introduced in the House soon, one of several last-minute changes being made to the Republican plan to repeal the Affordable Care Act.

Cuomo, who is looking to protect the state budget from a multi-billion-dollar hit, assailed Collins and fellow Republican Rep. John Faso by name over their support for the amendment, which would shift to the state Medicaid costs currently paid for by counties.

In a prepared statement, Cuomo called the amendment a "deathtrap" because "there is no way to make up the shortfall. The Upstate New York and Long Island economy will falter or collapse if the health sector is damaged."

"The bill for Congressmen Collins and Faso's rabid conservative zealotry will be paid by Upstate New York's hard working families, and those families will know exactly who to thank," Cuomo said.

The amendment is also supported by Rep. Claudia Tenney, who announced her support Monday for the ACA replacement bill, called the American Health Care Act, because the amendment would be included.

Collins responded Monday evening by pointing to Health Republic Insurance of New York, a co-op insurance plan that collapsed in late 2015. Collins said Health Republic's demise proves that the governor's support for the status quo is misplaced.

"Now the Governor wants everyone to stay silent, while he continues to fleece Upstate counties and their property taxpayers to fund Albany's bloated bureaucracy," Michael McAdams, spokesman for Collins said in a statement. "Congressman Collins has never been prouder to stand with the hardworking families of New York who will benefit from the Governor Cuomo-induced fiscal nightmare ending once and for all."

New York State's Medicaid program is paid for with county, state and federal dollars. The counties pay roughly 13 percent of the total Medicaid budget. Their contribution is capped so the percentage decreases every year. Collins' amendment, which excludes large municipalities such as New York City, would bar federal reimbursements for state Medicaid funds raised from local governments, shifting roughly \$2.3 billion in Medicaid spending from the counties to the state.

"The cut is so severe that the majority of hospitals, nursing homes and assisted living facilities located in Upstate New York and on Long Island would be devastated," Cuomo said.

It is not yet clear if the Senate's parliamentarian would allow the amendment to be part of the Republican package in that chamber, where there are strict rules about what may be passed under the Senate's expedited budget process that requires only 51 votes.

### **Tenney to vote for AHCA because of Collins' amendment**

By Dan Goldberg

Rep. Claudia Tenney said Monday she plans to vote for the American Health Care Act, the Republican plan to replace Obamacare.

Tenney, whose district stretches from the Southern Tier to Oswego County, told the Syracuse Post-Standard last week she was "leaning no," but changed her mind when

House leadership gave the go-ahead to an amendment that would shift the cost of Medicaid from the counties to the state.

The amendment is also supported by Rep. John Faso, who voted for the AHCA in the budget committee, and Rep. Chris Collins, who has been in a tiff with the Cuomo administration as the governor fears having to pick up the additional costs the counties had been shouldering.

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"Considering Rep. Tenney's history as a staunch advocate for the taxpayer, this is a great opportunity for her to advocate for real property tax relief for the 22nd District," her spokeswoman, Hannah Andrews, said in an email. "Oneida County has been forced to divert more than 80 percent of its property tax levy to fund Medicaid costs."

While the amendment stands a good chance of passing the House, it may not comply with the Senate's strict rules and its ultimate fate is in the hands of the parliamentarian, who Collins met with last week to plead his case.

The Republican repeal and replace plan has been crafted to pass under the Senate's expedited budget process so it only requires 51 votes. That means all parts have to comply with the Senate's Byrd rules, which require provisions to have a direct impact on the federal budget.

The Collins amendment, if it has its intended effect, would require money be moved around within a state, which may trigger a problem.

The argument in favor of letting the amendment into the final Senate bill is that if states do not comply with the law they lose their federal match, which would impact the federal budget. What remains to be seen is if the Senate parliamentarian buys that logic.

Either way, the possibility has caused a heated exchange between Collins and the Cuomo administration. Lt. Gov. Kathy Hochul said the proposal would "wreak havoc on the state."

Collins, who represents western New York, accused Hochul of selling out.

“Kathy Hochul has sold out Western New Yorkers to protect the Albany insiders she now serves,” Collins spokesman Michael McAdams said in a press release. “Instead of putting the taxpayer first, she sided with Albany’s special interests and their wasteful spending. Hard working families are tired of footing the bill for New York’s out of control Medicaid system that is putting our counties on the brink of bankruptcy. The good news is taxpayers can count on Congressman Collins to fight for them by refusing to feed Albany’s penchant for wasting our tax dollars.”

The Cuomo administration did not respond to a question about Collins’ statement.

The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee announced it was targeting Faso, Tenney and Rep. Elise Stefanik, over their support for the amendment and the AHCA.

“The House Republican repeal bill is an especially bad deal for New Yorkers, and this backroom amendment is nothing more than politicians putting lipstick on a pig,” the DCCC said in a statement.